Polyhedron®

NEWSZINE

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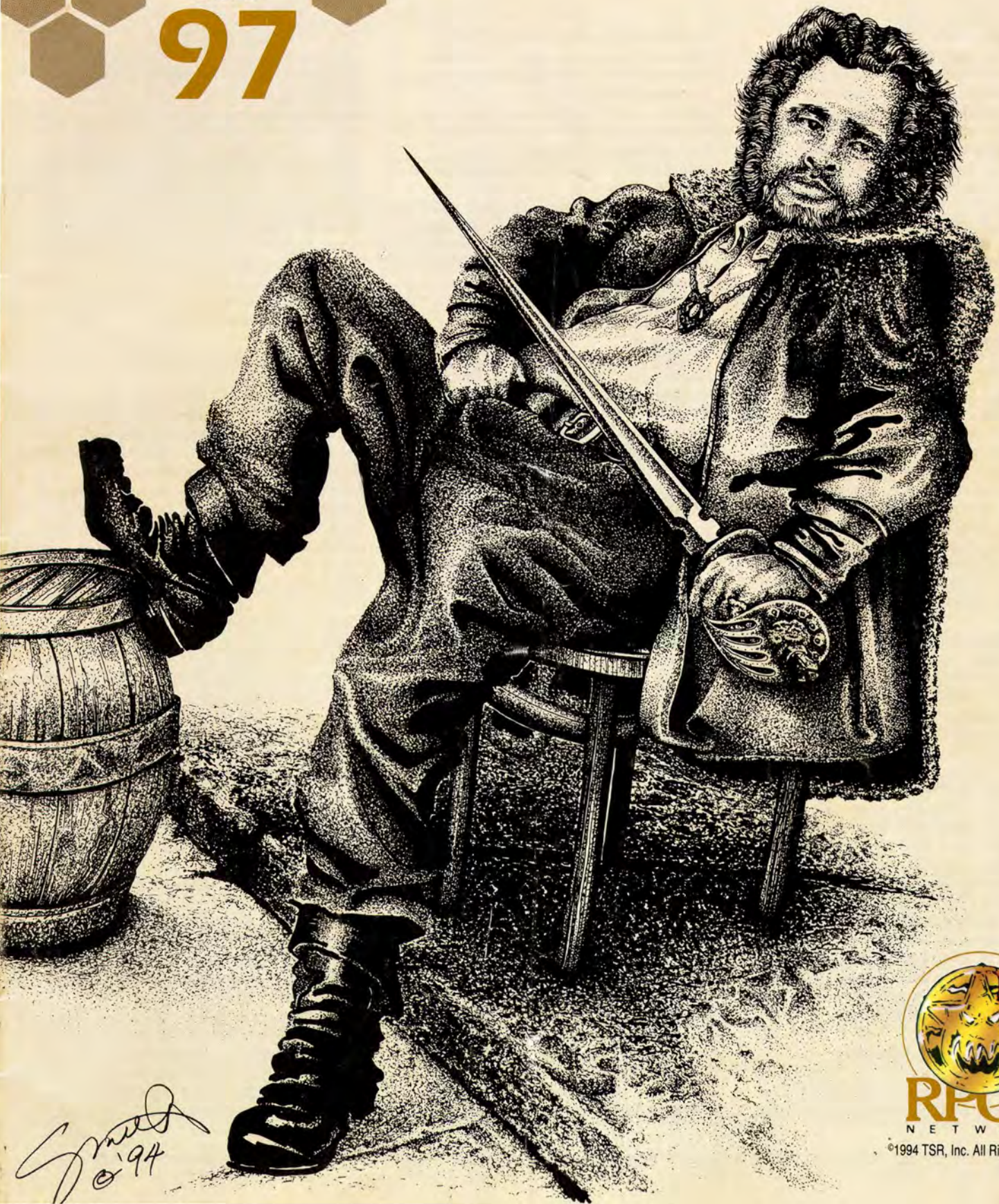

RPGA® NETWORK

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Conventions

Arcanacon, July 7-10
Melbourne, Australia
This convention will be held at the Collingwood Education Center and features special guest Ed Greenwood. Events include the AD&D® game, *His Master's Voice, Dark Future,* freeforms, and more. Contact 03 380 5016, or write to P.O. Box 125, Parkville, Victoria, 3052.

Noncon, July 15-17
Brisbane, Australia
Special guest Ed Greenwood highlights this convention at the Queensland University of Technology. Events include the AD&D game, *Bearenquest, Chill,* and more. For more information, write to P.O. Box 328, Carina, Queensland, 4152.

QuinCon IX, July 15-17
Quincy, IL
A fantastic mix of role-playing, miniature games, and board games featuring RPGA® Network tournaments, special guests, and a Saturday auction. Nearly 70 events, featuring both new games and classic favorites. No game fees. For more information, send a SASE to QUINCON IX, c/o Mark Hoskins, 1181 Pratt Street, Barry, IL 62312. Admission fees are $5 for one day or $12 for the weekend.

DragonCon, July 15-17
Atlanta, GA
This multi-media science-fiction and fantasy gaming convention features more than 250 hours of role-playing, miniature, board, and computer gaming tournaments including a $1,000 AD&D Game Team Tournament and a $1,000 Tournament of Champions Board Game event. Additional events include a 24-hour open gaming room, live role-playing events, and consignment game auctions. Pre-registration is $40 before June 15, $45 at the door, children six and under admitted free. For more information, call the 24-hour info/fax line at (404) 925-2813, or call the DragonCon office at (404) 925-0115. Or write: DragonCon '94, P.O. Box 47696, Atlanta, GA 30362-0696. Three-day registration is also available using Visa, MC, or AMEX by calling Ticketmaster at (404) 249-6400 through July 15.

Grand Game Con, July 15-17
Grand Rapids, MI
Held at the American Legion Post #179 at 2327 Wilson SW, this convention includes dealers and these game events: RPGA Network tournaments, the AD&D game, *Amber, GURPS, Star Wars, Space Marines, Cyberpunk, Vampire, Call of Cthulhu, Torg, Warhammer, Shadowrun, Napoleonics, Rail Barons, Starfleet Battles,* and more. Open at 8:30 a.m., events at 9:00. Pre-registration before May 31 is $6 for one day, $12 for both. Admission at the door is $7 per day. For more information contact: John Edelman, 321 Carlton SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506. Judges contact: Leon Gibbons, 13910 Olin Lakes Road, Sparta, MI 49345.

DexCon, July 21-24
Newark, NJ
This convention will be held at the Holiday Inn, Jetport. Network events include Feature, Grandmasters/Masters, DARK SUN®, RAVENLOFT®, several Living City, TOP SECRET™, *Marvel Super Heroes,* and *Star Wars* events. Non-Network events include a $1,000 live *Space Hulk* game, $1,000 Team tournament, and the return of the $2,500 Badge Riddle. Also running are miniatures events highlighted by the premier of the new 20mm Ogre game and the re-creation of the Battle of Hoth using the *Star Wars* miniatures rules. For more information, write to: Double Exposure, Inc., P.O. Box 3594, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163. Or call: (718) 881-4575.

July's Joust II, July 23-24
UNAM University, Mexico
This convention will be held at the Science Faculty at UNAM University. We will offer AD&D game and *Call of Cthulhu* tournaments, as well as costume, miniatures, and art contests. Pre-registration is required for the tournaments. For further information and registration, write to: Adrian Gomez, Vicente Equia 50, Col. Tacubaya, Mexico D.F. 11850, Mexico. Or call in Mexico: (915) 516-75-50. From the US, call: (011525) 516-75-50.

GEN CON® Game Fair, August 18-21
Milwaukee, WI
Join more than 20,000 gamers at the world's largest multi-media game fair featuring four days of events. The festivities include computer, military, role-playing, strategy, miniatures, virtual reality, video, arcade, and board games—more than 1,000 events in all. Game Fair is also the place to find RPGA Network events, from multi-round tournaments to Living City tournaments. More than 20 Network events will be available, with terrific prizes given out to the winners. The game fair also features a million-dollar art show, dozens of celebrities, a costume contest, *Star Trek* guests, comic-book artists, Japanimation, a 200-booth exhibit hall, and $10,000 in prize giveaways. For more information, write to: GEN CON Game Fair, P. O. Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Shorecon '94, September 9-11
Eatontown, NJ
This convention will be held at the Sheraton Eatontown Hotel. Guests include Jeff Menges and Jim Hlavaty. Events include role-playing, LARP, board, miniatures, and war games. Other activities include demos, dealers, anime, seminars, auction, and a dance. Registration: $15/weekend pre-registered, or $20/weekend at the door. Write to: Shorecon '94, 142 South Street, Unit 9C, Red Bank, NJ 07701-2216.

FoxCon '94, September 23-25
Elgin, IL
FoxCon will feature RPGA Network events run by MGM Grand gaming club, a *BattleTech* "Iron Warrior" tournament, and a silent auction. Other events include fantasy, SF, and historical miniatures. Japanese animation will be shown free all weekend in the auditorium. The con will be held at the Larsen Middle School at 665 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL. For further information, send a SASE to: Foxcon, 636 Center Street, Elgin, IL 60120.

Kennel Con, September 24-25
Waikiki, HI
This convention will be held at the Fort DeRussy USO, minutes away from beautiful Waikiki beach. Events include role-playing, board, and miniatures games. Other activites include the Arena, Japanese animation, and a few surprises. Registration: $3 plus small event fees. Write to: Kennel Con c/o Eric Kline, P.O. Box 90182, Honolulu, HI 96835-0182, or call Eric at (808) 623-3909. ❑

About the Cover

Larry Smith captures the Lord Mayor in a casual moment on this month's cover.

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Polyhedron® NEWSZINE

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The Living City

Champion of the Games

by Harold Johnson

Charles O'Kane, Lord Mayor

15th Level Human Fighter

STR: 18/38
INT: 14
WIS: 15
DEX: 12
CON: 17
CHA: 15

AC: −4, 10 unarmored
Hit Points: 100
Alignment: Lawful Neutral
THAC0: 6 (base)

Age: 74, appears late 40s
Height: 5'11"
Weight: 240 pounds
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Green

Weapon Proficiencies: Broad sword (specialized), dagger, spear, battle axe, short sword, mace, light crossbow
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Armorer (12), blind-fighting, charioteering (14), endurance (17), etiquette (15), seamanship (13), riding land-based (18), riding airborne (13)
Languages: Common, Elvish, Dwarvish
Magical Items: *plate mail +2, shield +2, broad sword +3, amulet of proof against detection and location, cloak of elvenkind, ring of warmth*

Charles Oliver O'Kane has served as Lord Mayor of Ravens Bluff for three decades, transforming the community from a precarious settlement threatened by pirates and bandits to a prosperous city with a bright future.

Both in council and on the battlefield, the Lord Mayor is smart and tenacious, seeking out hidden weaknesses in his opponents. He takes every advantage that is consistent with his sense of honor, which can be flexible if necessary. These traits make him the ideal mediator between the city's contending factions, such as the city nobles, independent nobles, guilds, workers, and the military—which might tear the city apart in the absence of such a strong presence.

Officially, Charles presides over the Council of Lords, the city's legislative body, and manages the civic bureaucracy. He formulates policy and budgets, drafts regulations, and arbitrates disputes between guild heads, dignitaries, and lords. He acts as the city's chief diplomat regarding nearby cities and realms, and he is quite prepared—and able—to lead the city's military and naval forces in battle. His early years as Lord Mayor were spent establishing an effective bureaucracy of appointed officials to help him with various tasks.

With an effective net of competent officials under him, Charles has been able to assign some of his duties to others, leaving him more hours to devote to rooting out corruption in the system. He recognizes the city will never be free of malignant influences and that he cannot keep every person with wealth and power under scrutiny. Still, he is confident he will be able to uncover the worst of the venality and reveal the transgressors to the public. He keeps a close watch on the city's tax office, prisons, foreign quarter, and embassy row, where representatives from other lands live for extended periods. Informants report that Zhentarim representatives come and go from some of the embassy houses and that Rasheman's house has seen a lot of traffic lately. Charles is more concerned with the Thayvian embassy and suspects it holds more than diplomats. He wonders if there are Red Wizards present who scheme to the detriment of Ravens Bluff and the nearby lands where the lords live. Still, Charles has kept a public "hands off" stance regarding happenings on Embassy Row, as he knows Ravens Bluff relies on other cities and countries for trade and does not want to jeopardize the economy by airing his fears and suspicions about some of the "diplomats."

Despite his self-imposed busy schedule, Charles finds time to serve as the city's ombudsman, personally attending to the problems of the city's people. While this has made him very popular among most Ravens Bluff residents, some criticize him for putting the laws before circumstances and for appearing neutral on several issues.

Charles has held the Lord Mayor position longer than any individual in Ravens Bluff's history. Though he enjoys the pomp and privileges his office affords, he misses the days when on a whim he and his friends would ride into the wilderness in search of ruins, treasures, and dragons. He has no intention of returning to an adventurers' life, however, as he has grown comfortable with amenities of civilization.

Charles, a lord with considerable holdings to the east of the city, won the Lord Mayor position in the Champions Games, a week-long contest centered on physical prowess, quick-thinking, and strength at arms. The city's Council of Lords regularly held the games every five years, as the body was never long-satisfied with a champion. There have been no games since Charles assumed power, as the majority of the lords are pleased with his even-handedness and his ability to bring order to the city. Some say the council has more authority with Charles, one of their own, as head of the city. Still, there are rumors that some of the lords are unhappy. Charles worries that there are some in the community who want to see him removed from office and replaced with someone who is not so unswerving on laws and so opposed to piracy—and that these individuals are trying to sway members of the Council of Lords. He has heard a few rumblings amid the lords about a call for another Champions Games. But when he queries the lords about this, they dismiss it as a silly rumor.

Charles is a bachelor. Though pretty young women are often seen on his arm at social functions, there is apprently no one lady who holds his heart. His critics say if the Lord Mayor had a family he would better understand the struggles of people with children in Ravens Bluff. His supporters say the lack of a family gives the Lord Mayor more time to devote to Ravens Bluff concerns. Charles merely listens to the gossip and decides which woman to invite to the next public reception.

A devout worshiper of Helm, Charles does not publicly tout his god. He believes in recognizing all deities worshipped in the city.

Notes From HQ

Connecticut, Chicago, and Ravens Bluff

Convention season has arrived again, and thousands of Network members are scheduling vacations to attend the upcoming GEN CON® Game Fair and many local conventions. Getting together with friends over a Network tournament or two is a great way to spend a couple of days off.

I had the pleasure to attend ConnCon in Danbury, CT recently—and I got to *play* a Living City event. I usually don't have time to play anything at a convention, especially LC, but Regional Director Willi Burger made sure my ConnCon schedule permitted time for a game. My chosen event was "When Beastly Beauties Go Mad," by Alex Lombardi. The title intrigued me, and I decided to play my first-level thief—not wanting to risk my third-level fighter against mad beauties. My thief, Asparatame Lactic (okay, I was at a loss for names so I used ingredients on a soda can), lived in spite of himself and walked away with a few hundred gold pieces. He also managed to get a big, high-spirited horse. Now all he needs is the land-based riding proficiency and a magical weapon.

ConnCon held a record number of Living City events, including a session with a bard in Whispers Tavern, and pulled in attendees with LC characters from as far away as Florida and Michigan. The convention also boasted a record number of LC character deaths—11 PCs met their ends over the weekend, and some of the players admitted the deaths were their own fault. "A PC should never wander off on his own when he knows there are monsters about," said one fellow who lost a 7th level druid.

The convention highlights included on-going *Magic: The Gathering* games, an AD&D® game club competition won by Death Warmed Over, a banquet that started two hours late because the hotel staff couldn't read military time, an ever-busy LC Magic Shop, an interactive event called Pope-Maker, and a Grand Masters tournament by John Terra featuring six even more annoying people.

I must admit that ConnCon is one of my all-time favorite conventions. The gaming is great, the strawberry lemonade is fantastic, and the con staff gets along—with everybody. It's nice to hear convention workers complimenting each other rather than complaining.

Also attending this year was Sam Lewis, the president of FASA. Sam busied himself running *BattleTech* events nearly non-stop and answering Clan and House questions. Sam also assisted in tallying the charity auction proceeds, and he sufficiently heckled the audience to contribute enough dollars to make the amount even.

Among the items auctioned were an autographed *Earthdawn* book, a gorgeous hand-forged dagger, Living City magical ribbons, and my favorite—a large "Free Willi" poster. Remember the movie poster of the whale leaping over a breakwater from last summer's Walt Disney movie? Well, a ConnCon staffer superbly superimposed Willi Burger's face over the whale's. The result netted $100 in the charity auction. All told, more than $2,000 was raised for the American Heart Association.

Little Wars and Spring Fantasy

Shortly after ConnCon was a Chicago event combining a war game con with a role-playing weekend. Little Wars was sponsored by the Historical Miniatures Gaming Society, and Spring Fantasy by Illinois Regional Director Keith Polster.

Again, the Living City events were the most widely attended. By the end of the weekend, I think I knew the LC tournament I was running by heart. In fact, so many gamers played the two LC tournaments, that there were only a handful of teams in the main AD&D game feature event. The convention was filled with many first-time LC players. And their characters tended to consume most of the *potions of healing* owned by veteran characters. While neither of the LC events were particularly deadly, several of the new players had not yet learned that "a PC should never wander off on his own when he knows there are monsters about."

Other highlights included a flea market, where *Magic: The Gathering* players stocked up on lightning bolts and fogs for a dime each, a massive used-games auction, and packed AD&D BATTLESYSTEM® game events. At times the most popular event seemed to be "where do I find my game?" The hotel was sprawled out like a spider, and gamers had to go up one leg, pass by the elevators and the restaurants, go down another leg, and then meander around the bend to find their next event. All in all, however, it was a great convention, and it offered such a wide variety of games that practically anyone could find something pleasantly to pass the time with.

The Living City Bazaar

Given the popularity of Living City events at other conventions around the country, LC events at the Game Fair likely will be at capacity, too. We're offering four events—Living City Masters, "The Rat Pack"; Living City Feature, "Death in the Shire"; Living City Challenge, "A Hero Takes A Fall," and the Living City Benefit, "Dark Harvest." The Network club tournament, where one lucky and skilled club can net $450 worth of TSR gift certificates, is also a Living City event. The clubs must design their own groups of PCs. For more information, contact your local club president.

Perhaps the LC highlight at the Game Fair will be the Living City Bazaar, scheduled from Noon to 8 p.m. Saturday. The event is open only to Network members. They can bring their LC characters and pick up interesting rumors, join adventurers' guilds, gamble their gold pieces away, apply for a post with the city guard, purchase land, rent a room, duel in the courtyard, trade magic items, create a coat of arms, mingle with interesting personages in the Red Raven Inn, participate in various contests—some of which are sponsored by the Knights of the Golden Rooster—and more.

It's an interactive event we hope will become a tradition.

Take Care,

Jean

The Living City

The Hand Of Mercy And Marigold's Menagerie

by Nicky Rea

Head cocked inquisitively to one side, Bounder, the big yellow dog, watched his mistress. She was busily tying ribbons in her red-blond hair. Tira looked at herself in the mirror as she finished straightening a pretty blue bow, then made a few quick gestures with her fingers. She knew she had the hand signals down correctly, but the facial expressions that went with them were harder to master.

As she frowned in concentration, Bounder lifted one ear, then stood and pushed his head against her hand. Taking her sleeve gently in his teeth, the big dog tugged lightly at her arm and looked up at her expectantly. Tira glanced down at her faithful friend and smiled, then headed purposefully for the door. Though she was unable to hear the bell which had just rung, announcing breakfast, Bounder had heard it and made sure the little girl was aware it was time to eat.

Less than an hour later, Tira skipped down the hall toward her class. When she reached the small room where her tutor waited, she noticed many youngsters shying away from the door. A few pressed forward, curious, yet timid in the presence of their new teacher—a drow. The dark elf spied Tira, smiled, and gestured with his slender hands. Tira's own sunny smile answered his, and her fingers moved more slowly, yet surely, in a greeting.

One young boy, head poked inside the doorway, propped himself up with a crutch to support the leg he had recently broken. He almost fell through in his eagerness to see the exotic dark elf, and hissed back to a younger companion. "See, I told you. That's what they call drow silent tongue. My father told me all about it. Tira sure is lucky! First she gets a trained dog, now she gets to learn how to talk like a drow. I sure wish I was deaf!"

The Hand of Mercy Children's Hospital and Orphanage

Near the gates to the city, on a small side street, stands a sturdy two-story stone building. The front door and the sign which hangs above it are painted dove grey and display the bound-wrists symbol of Ilmater, god of endurance and suffering. On the sign, deep indigo letters proclaim the building's purpose as the Hand of Mercy Children's Hospital and Orphanage.

Maintained by Mercy and Kindly Hande, sibling clerics of Ilmater, the hospital is open to all in need, but specializes in treating the injuries and illnesses of children. As its name indicates, this charitable institution also serves as Ravens Bluff's orphanage, with eight children (Joemy, Kirstyn, Petri, Tira, Bronwyn, Renej, Larisia, and Meech) currently in residence. Founded with the help of Joshua Kestrel and the Sandmen (detailed in *Inside Ravens Bluff, the Living City,* LC2), the "Hand" as it is affectionately called, has depended upon charitable contributions to finance it. There are personality clashes and the usual sorts of disputes among the children at the orphanage, but for the most part, all of them are happy to have a roof over their heads, food in their mouths, and adults who care for them.

Sister Mercy Hande

5th Level Female Human Cleric

STR: 10
INT: 15
WIS: 17
DEX: 10
CON: 15
CHA: 16

AC: 10
Hit Points: 33
Alignment: Lawful Good
Age: 39
Hair/Eyes: Graying brown/Dark brown
Height: 5'3"
Weight: 117
Languages: Common, Elvish
THAC0: 18

Weapon proficiencies: Mace, staff
Nonweapon proficiencies: Cooking (15), healing (15), herbalism (13), reading/writing (16), religion (17), weaving (14)
Magical items: *Potion of extra healing*
Spells carried: *Command, cure light wounds x 2, purify food and drink, remove fear, aid, enthrall, hold person, slow poison, wyvern watch, create food and water, cure disease.*

Mercy's looks are enhanced by the plain grey robe and skullcap worn by all clerics of Ilmater. The clothing makes her appear classically regal and matronly. She pulls her hair back into a long braid, and she occasionally wears an apron over her robe—especially when cooking or cleaning. She has a smile and a kind word for everyone. Though intolerant of those who complain for little or no reason, her compassion for those truly in need or enduring great suffering knows no bounds.

Once an adventurer, Mercy has settled back in Ravens Bluff with her younger brother after being drained of several life energy levels by a spectre. Her motherliness, coupled with her devotion to easing the pain of others, makes her a perfect choice for the position she holds as head of the hospital and orphanage. Though she thinks the name of the facility is too self-serving, she couldn't disappoint her brother (whose love of puns is legendary) by refusing to use the name he suggested.

Because the facility is so poor, she usually carries *purify food and drink* and *create food and water* spells to make certain that there is enough for everyone to eat and that the stores (which are sometimes donations of almost-spoiled food) are fresh enough.

Brother Kindly Hande

2nd Level Male Human Cleric

STR: 12
INT: 14
WIS: 16
DEX: 13
CON: 14
CHA: 12

AC: 10
Hit Points: 14
Alignment: Lawful Good
Hair/Eyes: Sandy brown/Dark brown
Age: 28
Height: 5'8"
Weight: 156

Languages: Common
THAC0: 20

Weapon proficiencies: Mace, staff
Nonweapon proficiencies: Carpentry (12), healing (14), musical instrument (mandolin) (13), reading/writing (15), religion (16), spellcraft (12)
Spells carried: *Bless, cure light wounds x 2, protection from evil*

Though he looks very much like his elder sister, Kindly Hande has more of a twinkle in his eyes and is possessed of an unending supply of puns. He, too, is a cleric of Ilmater.

When his sister approached him about opening a children's hospital and orphanage, he immediately agreed, seeing it as an extension of the work he was already doing. Though he serves as a father figure for the children and as a secondary healer, one of his main duties is the upkeep of the building itself. He is fond of joking that he is the facility's "HAND-y-man." Despite his penchant for jokes, he is a caring and concerned man, whose devotion to the children shows.

Tira

0 Level Female Human

STR: 6
INT: 13
WIS: 10
DEX: 16
CON: 9
CHA: 17

AC: 8
Hit Points: 3
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Hair/Eyes: Red-blond/Blue
Height: 3'7"
Weight: 52
Age: 8
Languages: Drow silent tongue
THAC0: 20

Weapon proficiencies: None
Nonweapon proficiencies: Animal handling (9)

With her red-blond ponytails, bright, blue eyes, and happy disposition, Tira is one of the most attractive children in the orphanage. However, she has been passed over for adoption when other less attractive children were chosen because she is a child with special needs.

Though she is quite intelligent and sweet-tempered, she was born deaf. She has struggled to fit in since being left at the orphanage six years ago. Though she learned simple signs to make her basic needs known, she has lacked any method to express more complex messages until recently—when she began studying Drow silent tongue with her tutor, Dusk. Additionally, she has a very special friend, a dog named Bounder who "hears" for her, and whom she loves fiercely.

Trained Companion Dog (Bounder): Int Animal; AL Neutral; AC 7; MV 15; HD 1+1; hp 7; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SZ M (4' long); ML Average (10).

Bounder is a big, yellow mutt that Marigold Mufflefoot (the owner of Marigold's Menagerie) found in a back alleyway. The dog was half starved, but seemed well-mannered and good-tempered, so Marigold took him in and trained him as a companion animal.

When Marigold heard about Tira's case from Joshua Kestrel, he decided that the big, gentle mutt would be the perfect hearing-ear dog for her. Bounder has proven to be indispensable to Tira, alerting her to possible dangers, audible signals, and changes in her environment she cannot hear for

herself. He is totally devoted to Tira and would fight to protect her.

Valandrin Telenna "Dusk"

Fighter/Mage/Thief 3/3/4 Male Drow Elf

STR: 9
INT: 17
WIS: 9
DEX: 18
CON: 8
CHR: 15

AC: 3
Hit Points: 28
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Age: 82
Hair/Eyes: White/Midnight blue
Height: 5'
Weight: 97
Languages: Drow, Drow silent tongue, Common, Elvish
THAC0: 18

Weapon proficiencies: Ambidexterity, two-weapon style, long sword, darts
Nonweapon proficiencies: Blind fighting, juggling (17), modern language (Common) (17), reading/writing (Drow & Common) (18), rope use (18), spellcraft (15), tightrope walk (18), tumbling (18)
Magical items: *Bracers of defense AC 8, ring of protection +1, long sword +1, Skie's locks and bolts, medallion of spell exchange,* one use *Keoghtom's ointment, potion of healing, potion of superheroism, potion of invisibility, scroll of protection from fire,* scroll with *mirror image, invisibility,* and *wizard eye* spells.
Spells carried: *Detect magic, friends, glitterdust*

Thief Skills

PP 35	OL 30	FT 50	MS 70
DN 25	HS 70	CW 75	RL 15

Born in the underdark and lost during a training foray, Dusk wandered from the lightless passages below to the surface. He fell prey to mercenaries who would have lynched him had it not been for the intervention of a paladin of Ilmater known as Rook.

Rook brought Dusk to Ravens Bluff, where the young drow joined a newly forming adventuring company. As a member of the Ravens Bluff Irregulars, Dusk helped the city apprehend wrong-doers. He is still somewhat childlike, exhibiting great trust in almost everyone he meets until they prove themselves untrustworthy.

He is, however, initially distrustful of women, especially priestesses, as he vividly recalls the priestesses of Lolth, who control the drow cities of the underdark. Once he gets to know a female and she proves herself, the distrust fades, and he relaxes around her.

Most recently, Dusk has run for the office of deputy mayor of Ravens Bluff and has begun teaching Drow silent tongue to Tira as a way of repaying his life-debt to Rook. He will be the auctioneer for the upcoming Living City auction to benefit the children's hospital and Marigold's Menagerie.

The Facility

The ground floor of the building contains the public areas of the hospital and orphanage and Kindly's bedroom. A broad wooden staircase leads up to the second floor, which houses the children's and Mercy's bedrooms. Though the furnishings are plain, the walls of the children's rooms and the hospital have been painted with bright colors, and cheerful-looking crazy quilts adorn the beds. A small courtyard in the back serves as both a laundry area and playground for the children.

The Ground Floor

A. The Waiting Room

The waiting room is painted a pale blue and holds two padded benches, a few old chairs, a table and some ragged toys. A parchment, pen, and ink bottle wait atop the table for those able to sign in. Those who cannot read and write make a mark to indicate their turn.

B: Treatment Rooms

The two pale yellow treatment rooms each hold a long table, cot, wash basin, and shelf filled with herbal remedies, bandages, splints, and other medical supplies. When there is need, either room can serve as a surgery. Patients are usually treated here, then released. Only very serious cases are moved into the hospital ward rooms.

C: Storage Rooms

These hold various medical supplies and tools as well as bed linens, blankets, soap and cleaning supplies.

D: The Pantry

The food supplies, dishes and utensils are kept in the pantry. Perishables are kept on ice. There is usually very little beyond flour and lentils in the pantry.

E: Kitchen

The kitchen has serviceable, though old equipment. A large fireplace, a sink and an old table fill the greater part of the room. During particularly cold weather, it is not uncommon for everyone to gather around the kitchen fire for hot cider and storytelling.

F: Dining Room

Though the dining room serves both the orphanage residents and the ambulatory patients, it is not set up formally. Four small tables with chairs around each make this pale salmon room seem quite homey and inviting. Two glass chandeliers imbued with continual light spells brighten this enclosed room as if with warm daylight.

G: Boys' Hospital Ward

Painted a rich blue-green, this cheerful room holds up to 10 beds for seriously ill or injured patients. A rack at the end of the room holds several toys and scrolls which the children may use. Room G1 is the boys' bath room and holds tubs, chamber pots, soap, and towels.

H: Carpentry Shop

Kindly usually can be found in this sawdust-smelling room surrounded by broken furniture or other wood projects which currently interest him. Occasionally, one of the children takes an interest in learning carpentry, and Kindly is only too happy to teach.

I: Classrooms

Mercy and Kindly are great believers in literacy and in learning skills which might be useful in trade. They hold classes in reading and writing, basic arithmetic, and weaving in these rooms. Whenever they can persuade a local craftsperson to donate some time, there are special classes in everything from cobbling to gem cutting.

J: Girls' Hospital Ward

With the exception of being painted a lovely spring green, this room is exactly like the boys' ward (area G). Room J1 is the girls' bath area.

K: Private Study Rooms

These small rooms are used for individual study, for uninterrupted reading, or for special classes.

L: Kindly's Bedroom
This room is painted dove gray and is simply decorated with Ilmater's symbol on the wall. The one concession to real comfort is an overstuffed chair in one corner with a mandolin sitting in it. Kindly never carries his weapons with him, stuffing them under his bed instead. He keeps 3 gp hidden under a loose floorboard for an emergency. A sign on his door reads, "Kindly knock before entering." Residents have gotten used to his knocking on his own door before opening it—just another of his little jokes.

M: Laundry Area
This area takes up part of the wide alleyway behind the building and is used to wash and dry the facility's linens. The children rotate this chore.

N: Playground
Although this is just a wide back alleyway, there are painted boxes and barrels and a few boards which Kindly has arranged into a sort of playground area for the children. There is also room for footraces and more rough-and-tumble games.

O: Alleyway
This wide alley between the facility and the building next door often serves as an outdoor classroom when leather-workers or blacksmiths demonstrate their skills for the children.

The Upper Floor

1: Common Room
The common room serves as a gathering area for the children. It is furnished with a few old chairs and lots of pillows.

Area 2: Mercy's Bedroom
Like her brother, Mercy chose dove gray paint for her room, but the symbol of Ilmater which hangs on the back of her door is complemented by a number of red pillows and a red-and-gray striped coverlet on the bed. Her weapons are stored in a wooden chest at the foot of her bed, and cover a locked metal box which holds the deed to the property, the ledger books, and a sack holding 56 sp. Among her soap and bath supplies is a bottle labeled "anti-itch oil." It actually contains a *potion of extra healing*, which she is holding in reserve for a truly serious case.

Areas 3—9: Boys' Bedrooms
These rooms are all essentially the same. Each holds a bed, table, chair, wardrobe, and small bookcase. Curtains at the windows match the color scheme of the wall paint and crazy quilts.

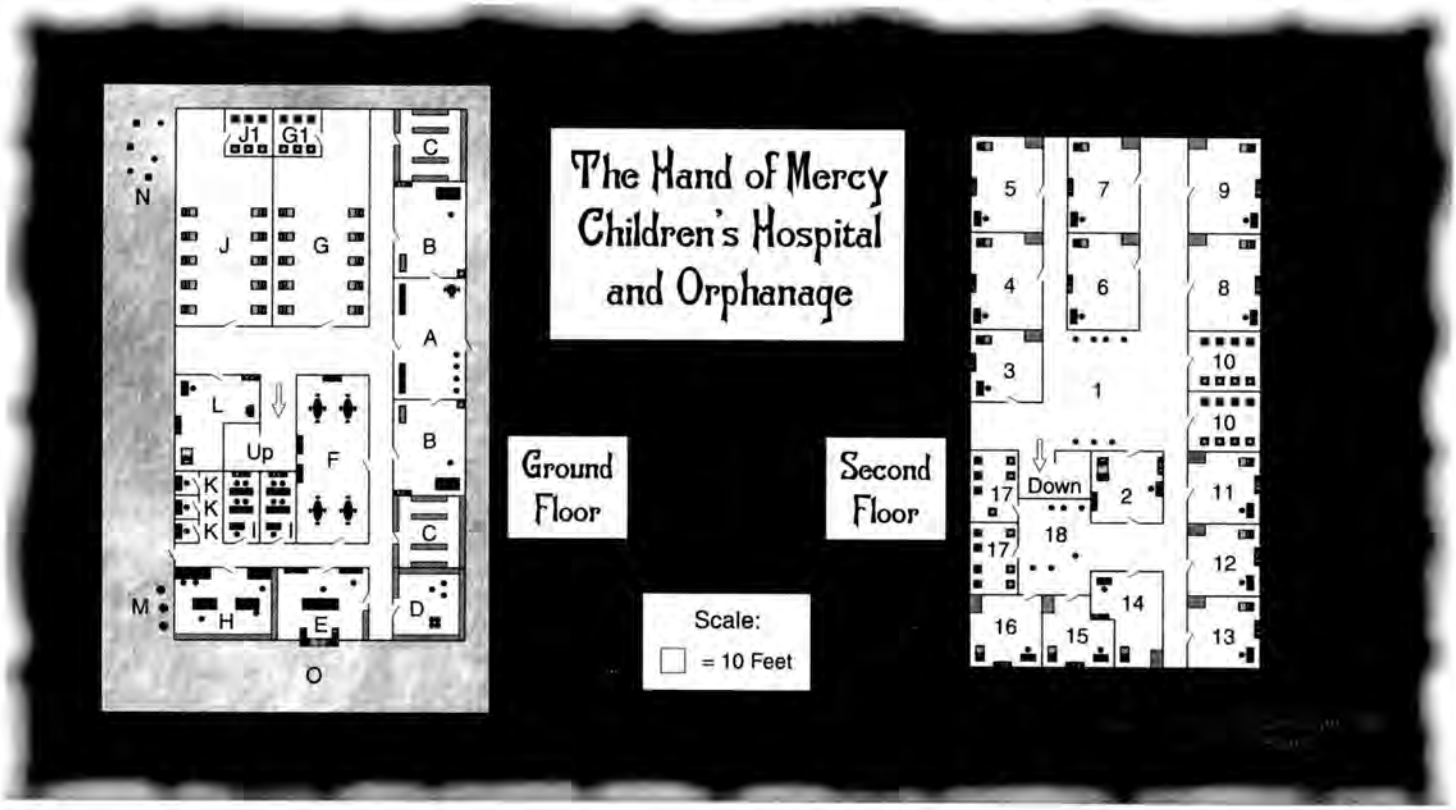
Room 3: This room is empty.

Room 4: Joemy's bedroom. The room is done in green. Joemy is six, with black hair and brown eyes. He wants to be a fighter.

Room 5: Renej's bedroom. Renej is a four-year-old blond, blue-eyed half-elf. His room is painted blue and white. Renej's most valued possession is his stuffed owlbear.

Room 6: Petri's bedroom. This room is painted white, but features several of 12-year-old Petri's own drawings. Petri has short brown hair and green eyes.

Room 7: Meech's bedroom. The room is painted a glowing amber and decorated with various "interesting rocks" Meech has collected. Meech is nine and is the comedian and practical joker of the orphanage. His hair and eyes are brown, and his face is terribly scarred from the fire which killed his parents. No one has been found who is interested in adopting Meech, but the other children no longer notice the disfigurement.



Rooms 8 and 9: This room is currently empty.

Areas 10: Boys' Bathrooms. These are essentially the same as the bath areas for the hospital wards on the lower floor. They are divided into two separate rooms to cut down on the amount of horseplay and splashing liable to occur within.

Areas 11—16: Girls' Bedrooms

These rooms are much like the boys'.

Rooms 11 and 12: This room is currently empty.

Room 13: Bronwyn's bedroom. Painted a pale pink, this room features eight-year-old Bronwyn's collection of rag dolls. Bronwyn has pale blond hair and blue eyes. She is a chubby, healthy child and likes to play "let's pretend" with her dolls.

Room 14: Kirstyn's bedroom. Originally painted pale green, seven-year-old Kirstyn's bedroom now boasts the lavender stripes she applied herself! Badly made lavender curtains attest to her interest in learning the art of sewing. Kirstyn's rough black hair and black eyes are an indication of her orcish father, though the rest of her features look completely human.

Room 15: Larisia's bedroom. Larisia's room is painted dove gray and features Ilmater's symbol. This quiet, gray-eyed and brown-haired 13-year-old is seriously considering joining Ilmater's priesthood.

Room 16: Tira's bedroom. Tira's room is painted pale blue. The crazy quilt on her bed has a matching one in Bounder's sleeping box (made for Bounder by Kindly). Half-finished necklaces of strung beads and feathers litter the table in the room, awaiting Tira's return.

Areas 17: Girls' Bath Rooms

These are the same as the boys' areas.

Area 18: Sewing Area

This room has several low stools and pillows and a large sewing basket. Clothes and linens in need of repair are placed in the basket, where any of the residents who can mend fix them.

Adventure Ideas

* A child who was recently brought to the orphanage is missing. She has no memory of who she is or how she got to Ravens Bluff, and Mercy is afraid she is wandering the streets.

* Tira's dog Bounder has been accused of stealing meat from the butcher's shop across the way. The butcher demands a large sum of money (which the orphanage cannot pay) and that the dog be slain or sent away from the city. Tira is sure Bounder didn't do it and tries to make the PCs understand that she needs help finding the real culprit.

Marigold's Menagerie

Marigold's Menagerie occupies one of the few permanent buildings in the tent city outside the gates of Ravens Bluff. It is a solidly built stone and wood structure with a tile roof and a large, fenced-in area in the rear. A brightly-painted sign hangs upon a sturdy post before the front door. It is shaped like a tiger and reads, "Marigold's Menagerie, cost: children 1 cp, adults 2 cp. Welcome." Children who cannot afford the price are asked to help clean a cage or feed an animal as their admission fee.

The menagerie is a zoo of sorts, and it also functions as a training center for companion animals. It is not a pet store, but a school and animal sanctuary where stray cats and dogs are taught useful skills and retired circus animals are housed, fed, and cared for in their waning years.

Though there is a nominal charge for admission to the "zoo," most of the funds for the menagerie's upkeep come from charitable contributions. Marigold tries to house the animals in comfortable quarters, feed them well, and schedule exercise outdoors for each of them sometime during each day (or night). In addition, he guides tour groups through the menagerie explaining what he knows about each animal and trains the cats and dogs.

Marigold Mufflefoot

0 Level Male Halfling Animal Trainer

STR: 10
INT: 17
WIS: 15
DEX: 15
CON: 12
CHA: 10
COM: 12

AC: 9
Hit Points: 5
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Halfling
THAC0: 20

Age: 34
Hair/Eyes: Blond/Gray
Height: 3'1"
Weight: 68

Weapon proficiencies: Lasso
Nonweapon proficiencies: Animal handling (14), animal lore (17), animal training (dogs, cats, horses) (14)
Magical items: *Ring of animal friendship* (22 charges)

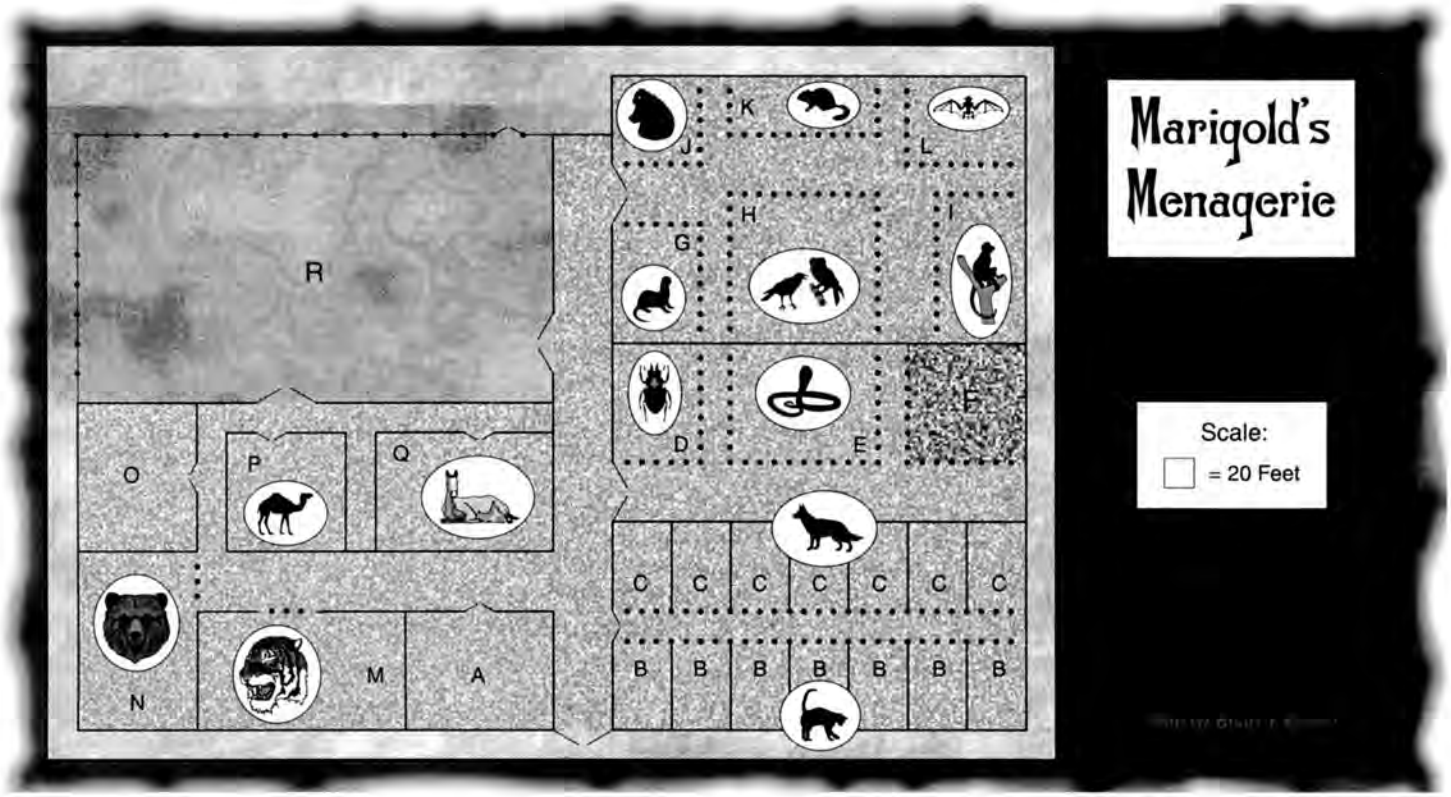
Marigold Mufflefoot is a friendly, outgoing halfling who loves to dress in colorful clothes and whose devotion to animals is unparalleled. When he discovered he could not be a druid, he was crushed, but he made the best of things by becoming Isbeau Navarne's assistant at the Mooney & Sons Circus (detailed in *Inside Ravens Bluff, The Living City*, LC 3).

Marigold served as the slop boy for two years before he began working with Isbeau and learning how to train the less dangerous animals. He learned quickly and would eventually have joined Isbeau in his act had not Rakenda, the tiger, become too old to continue performing. Marigold was worried that the old, practically toothless tiger would be put to sleep or turned loose in the wild. For weeks he thought about the problem until he hit upon a solution. He suggested to Isbeau that the circus should open a menagerie where the retired circus animals could live out their natural life spans in comfort. The people of Ravens Bluff could come visit the animals and learn about them. Isbeau was intrigued.

The circus helped build the structure which houses the menagerie, and at Isbeau's suggestion, Marigold became the head of the facility. They could not, however, divert large sums of gold to keep it open. For that, Marigold turned to the charity of the citizens of Ravens Bluff and to the small fees which tours of the menagerie brought in. This sufficed for a while.

Soon, however, the place was overrun with stray dogs and cats that Marigold brought home because he couldn't stand to see them starve or be abused by cruel owners. He knew he couldn't keep taking in more animals without finding good homes for the ones he already had, but he needed some way to guarantee that the people who took his dogs and cats wouldn't mistreat them.

He knew that people respected well-trained animals and that animals which provided some service to people



were valued more highly than pets. He was also aware of many people who could not hear or who needed someone to watch over them. He thought these people might benefit from a companion that was trained to assist them. Thus was born his training school for animals. Those who can afford to pay for the animal do so; those who cannot afford such a companion are usually gifted with one. One of Marigold's best success stories involved a big, yellow mutt he trained as a hearing-ear dog for a little orphan named Tira.

From training cats and dogs, he has branched out into marketing other small animals. A main source of income for the menagerie now comes from wizards seeking familiars. Marigold specializes in bringing together wizards and cats, crows, owls, toads, and weasels. They meet in the training area out back and get to know one another. After a few such visits, Marigold allows the wizard to set up casting equipment in the training area and attempt to summon a familiar. Because of the previous relationship the two have, more often than not the animal which the wizard has been visiting responds to the summons. Marigold collects a 10 gp fee for this service.

Additionally, in return for their occasional help cleaning the animal pens and feeding the animals, Marigold allows rangers and clerics in during off hours to observe the animals' behaviors or to practice their *speak with animals* and *animal friendship* spells. He is particularly happy whenever druids visit, since he values their opinions about the animals and welcomes any herbal remedies or dietary suggestions they have regarding his charges.

The druids who frown on his activities, saying that he ought to free the animals to live or die in accordance with nature, make him very sad. Marigold sometimes wonders if they are right—particularly if he is beset with money troubles at the time. He usually perks up again, however, when he sees the good his companions perform.

The Menagerie

Area A: Marigold's Rooms

This area holds Marigold's bedroom, bath, and kitchen. He usually has one or two cats, dogs, or small mice sharing his quarters at any given time. If any of the smaller animals are sick, Marigold brings them into his rooms to nurse them back to health. Consequently, almost everything he owns is covered with hair of one sort or another, and most of his furniture and coverings have claw marks on them. He keeps the menagerie's books and money in a locked box in a hole under his chamber pot. The box usually holds 5-15 gp.

Areas B: Cat Kennels

Found in the same room as the dog kennel, the cat kennel currently houses four cats: Blissful, Miss Furry, Silverclaw, and Rowl. Each cage has a food bowl, water dish, sleeping area, climbing/scratching post and a few toys. Miss Furry is being trained as a companion for an elderly lady.

Areas C: Dog Kennels

Like the cat kennels located across from them, these provide individual areas for the dogs in residence. Each has food and water bowls, a soft bed, ramps and platforms, and chew toys. There are only three dogs currently in the kennels. One is Rovo, an old, blind circus dog that is living out his retirement here; another is Barker, a large, black wardog being trained as a guardian and companion for an old soldier who lost a leg in battle. The last dog, located in cage C1, is not a normal

dog at all, but a blink dog puppy brought back by adventurers when its mother was accidently killed. Marigold has named it Telepup.

Area D: Fire Beetle
Phredd, the fire beetle, is a great crowd pleaser, especially among the children who love to watch it light up.

Area E: Snake Pit
One of the most popular and feared parts of the menagerie is the snake pit. More than 30 snakes, all non-poisonous, are housed here. Marigold has named each of them "Squirmy."

Area F: Osquip
Oliver, the osquip, is probably the most boring exhibit in the menagerie, for he prefers to hide under parchment and wood chips when visitors appear. He can be enticed out by offering him small gemstones, which Marigold sells to the curious for 1 gp each.

Area G: Ferret
Locksmith, the ferret, is more often out of his cage than in it. Marigold has never yet been able to find a lock which the agile ferret cannot undo. Though he has been provided with almost everything a ferret could desire to play with, Locksmith derives his greatest pleasure from opening the other cages in the room. Consequently, Marigold always has to check that every creature is where it is supposed to be before allowing visitors inside.

Area H: Owl and Raven
This is one of the floor to ceiling cages in this area. Half a tree trunk leans inside the cage to serve Genius, the owl, and Noble, the raven. Though they occasionally squabble, the two get along most of the time (probably because Noble is active during the day, while Genius is nocturnal).

Area I: Monkey House
Another floor to ceiling cage, the monkey house has only two occupants in residence: Fleur, a mother spider monkey that lost an eye to a hawk and her baby, Fleurette. They also have part of a tree trunk with branches to climb in and a rock-strewn gulley-like area in which they can hide for privacy.

Area J: Porcupine
Ambitious the porcupine rules in all his splendor in this corner cage. A mock dirt bank with a porcupine hole serves as his shelter, and he can wander through trays full of tall grasses which are frequently changed and put outside to keep them fresh. He frequently bristles magnificently when visitors stop by his cage, but he has never shot his quills at anyone. He seems just to enjoy the attention.

Area K: Squirrels and Chipmunks
Chatterer the squirrel and his family made their way in through a broken window pane and took up residence in this cage. They apparently found the tree trunk within it to their liking and the seeds and nuts left for the original residents, a family of chipmunks, to be great delicacies. Chipper and his family don't seem to mind their neighbors, who are more likely to perform for visitors than the shy chipmunks, which scurry away when company comes.

Area L: White Bat
Ghost is an albino bat brought to Marigold by a farmer who thought the creature might be valuable. Marigold fixed the creature's broken wing (damaged in a battle with the farmer's wife, who apparently didn't appreciate the creature's value), and paid the farmer 4 gp for the little bat.

Area M: Tiger
Rakenda the old, toothless tiger lives out his last years here. The rumbling purr which greets the halfling whenever he visits this beloved animal is reward enough for Marigold to feel the menagerie venture is a success. Rakenda is a favorite among the children who visit, and he still commands an audience whenever he is in the exercise yard.

Area N: Bear
Artur, an old brown bear, was a druid's companion for many years. When the druid died, Marigold claimed Artur rather than see him returned to the wild, where the aging bear would probably die. Artur, too, usually attracts an audience whenever Marigold can get the lazy thing outside for some exercise.

Area O: Storage
Food for the animals is kept in this area. A few herbal remedies which Marigold depends on for treatments for minor ailments are also stored here. One section has been turned into an ice box and holds the meat which several of the animals require.

Area P: Camel
Aburu, the foul-tempered camel, holds court in her cage and spits at all passersby. She is thoroughly unpleasant, untrainable, bad tempered, and arrogant, which made her completely unfit for circus life. Marigold is looking for someone trustworthy to take the perfectly healthy camel back where she came from.

Area Q: Horses
Fancy and Gypsy, two retired circus horses (mares), are housed here. They have straw in their boxes, but they prefer grazing in the exercise yard. Both are trained to do tricks, but Marigold seldom allows them to perform during exercises, for he fears their old legs are too brittle for such hijinks now.

Area R: Exercise Yard and Training Ground
This fenced-in area serves several purposes. It provides some grazing for the horses and doubles as an exercise area for all the animals in the menagerie. Additionally, Marigold trains his companion dogs and cats here in the special maneuvers and duties they will need to perform. Finally, it is used as a bath area, and neighborhood children are invited inside to help on "wash days."

Adventure Ideas

* Marigold has finally given up on Aburu, the camel. He hires the PCs to escort the foul-tempered beast back to the desert and sell or give her away to whoever will take her.

* Telepup is missing from his cage. Although Marigold is heartbroken, he doesn't have time to look for the little blink dog, and hires the PCs to find him.

* Locksmith has really done it this time! When Marigold returns from a lunch in town, he finds most of the cages open and empty. Little ferret tracks lead from one cage to the next. The animals have scattered, and Marigold needs help finding them—especially the ones people might think are dangerous—before people panic and harm them.

Into The Dark

Waxy Yellow Build-up

by James Lowder

There's something essentially creepy about wax museums. Maybe it's the nasty suspicion most people have that the lifelike figures are actually alive, watching customers, waiting for someone to lag behind the tour group. Maybe it's the fact that waxworks are often chilly and dimly lit. The atmosphere's mostly for the benefit of the sculptures, but it can't help but lend the place an air of mystery.

It shouldn't be surprising, then, that waxworks have been the setting for a number of horror films over the last sixty years. The videos reviewed this time around show the range of this little sub-genre, from such classics as *House of Wax* to such forgettable clunkers as *Nightmare in Wax*. Moreover, viewing these films in so short a span has also revealed to me three laws of the Waxworks Code (entrepreneurs take note):

Law #1: Only a madman may serve as proprietors to a waxworks. Facial scars, black cloaks, and hunchbacked associates are helpful, but not required. Note: John Carradine is exempt from this Law, as he is commonly mistaken for mad, regardless of his true mental state.

Law #2: Because waxworks are magnets for dead bodies, any corpse found in, or brought to, the premises shall be recycled (ie. made part of the exhibits) as soon after discovery as possible.

Law #3: The workroom of all waxworks must feature a large, bubbling vat of molten wax, surrounded by a high catwalk, ledge, or balcony. Under no circumstances will this catwalk be edged by a railing of more than two feet in height or constructed of a material able to hold the weight of a man. If possible, a sizeable gap will be left in said railing so as not to impede mad proprietors from tumbling into the boiling wax during dramatic struggles with heroic do-gooders or law enforcement types.

Given these laws, you should be able to construct the basic plot for at least four of the five movies reviewed here.

As for each film's merit, the rating system runs:

You can't get any better	*****
Entertaining and enjoyable	****
There are worse films	***
Wait for cable	**
A waste of good tape	*

Mystery of the Wax Museum

1933, 73 Minutes
Warner Brothers
Director: Michael Curtiz
Cast: Lionel Atwill, Fay Wray
***

Mystery of the Wax Museum marked the second time director Michael Curtiz worked with Lionel Atwill and Fay Wray in a horror flick. (The first was the classic mad scientist film, *Doctor X*). Monster movie regular Atwill was a good choice for the master artist, Ivan Igor, whose beautiful wax sculptures are destroyed in a fire set by his unscrupulous business partner. He brings a cold intensity to the part as he creaks about, crippled and wheelchair-ridden by the fire, looking to recreate his destroyed masterpieces in 1930s New York. And if corpses that happen to resemble the lost figures start turning up—well, who can blame Igor for taking advantage of such an opportunity?

As for Wray, her role as Charlotte seems largely focused on her talent to scream—an ability she used frequently in such genre classics as *King Kong*. She does her best with a thin role here, looking sweet and unknowing as Igor sizes her up to be his replacement for Marie Antoinette. That's not to say the part has no meat whatsoever; her final confrontation with Atwill is effectively chilling, due largely to Wray's horrified reactions.

Despite the film's billing, Wray isn't really the female lead. That honor goes to Glenda Farrell as the tough-as-nails reporter who cracks the wax museum mystery and brings the law down on Igor. In fact, *Mystery of the Wax Museum* is more a newspaper melodrama than a horror flick. A sizeable chunk of the film is filled by Farrell bantering with the police or her editor in exchanges rife with groaningly outdated slang.

Try to slog through all the sour dialogue and failed comic relief; *Mystery* can deliver a few worthwhile chills. The two-strip Technicolor cinematography is eerie and effective. And the world depicted in the film is surprisingly grim, filled with drug addicts and plenty of hints to darker things that involve the corpses of the recently murdered.

Atwill and Wray made one more film together, *The Vampire Bat* (1933), but without director Curtiz to shepherd them. As for Curtiz, he went on direct more than 160 wildly varied films in his career. You might have heard of a few of them—*Captain Blood, The Adventures of Robin Hood, Angels with Dirty Faces, Mildred Pierce, White Christmas*, and a little-known romantic tearjerker called *Casablanca*.

House of Wax

1953, 90 Minutes
Warner Brothers
Director: Andre de Toth
Cast: Vincent Price, Phyllis Kirk, Carolyn Jones, Paul Picerni
***1/2

This remake of 1933's *Mystery of the Wax Museum* made Vincent Price a horror superstar. Price plays the character first brought to the screen by Lionel Atwill (though now renamed Professor Henry Jarrod). But where Atwill portrayed the wronged wax sculptor as cold, Price is smooth and charming, eliciting more sympathy and thus more revulsion when it's revealed that he has been murdering people in order to recreate the wax masterpieces lost to arson.

Price's character is only one of the improvements *House of Wax* makes to the original. Add to that the character of Cathy Gray, the girl murdered to become Joan of Arc. In *Mystery*, the character was nothing more than a corpse that sets the crusading reporter on Atwill's trail; in *House*, she is wonderfully portrayed by Carolyn Jones as a giggling gold-digger in search of a rich husband. (Those of you who've seen Jones only as Morticia in "Addams

Family" reruns have no idea how fine an actress she was.) You'll also want to watch for young Charles Buchinsky—aka Bronson—as Price's mute assistant.

On the down side, *House of Wax* loses much of the edge that made its predecessor so chilling. Gone are the references to drug addiction, and the tough female reporter has been cut out of the story, leaving Phyllis Kirk to scream and play hostage. Still, the film is a better horror story, sporting entirely new sequences (like the deformed Price chasing the heroine through fog-shrouded streets in turn-of-the-century New York).

House of Wax was a technical marvel for its time. It was recorded in Warner Phonic (a precursor of stereo) and filmed in 3-D. Director Andre de Toth managed to avoid cluttering up the movie with 3-D effects that were blatantly obvious or interrupted the story (with the exception of the guy with the paddleball who serves as the waxworks' barker). Oddly enough, de Toth was blind in one eye, so he couldn't even see the 3-D process he helped make so popular!

Nightmare in Wax

1969, 95 Minutes
A&E Film-Paragon/Crown
Director: Bud Townsend
Cast: Cameron Mitchell, Ann Helm, Scott Brady
*

Perennial bad guy Cameron Mitchell stars as Vincent, the scarred and psychotic former make-up man seeking revenge against the Hollywood studio chief who done him wrong. You see, Vincent used to be the steady guy of starlet Marie Morgan (Anne Helm) before the evil Max Black of Paragon Studios lit his head on fire. (Accidentally, of course. Max happened to toss a drink at Vincent while the poor guy was lighting a cigarette. Hey, happens all the time. . . .)

Seeing as this time-waster is titled *Nightmare in Wax*, you can sort of guess what happens next. Vincent starts grabbing Paragon's stars and hiding them in the waxworks he now runs. He doesn't kill them, just shoots them full of this suspended animation formula that will, unsurprisingly, wear off at just the wrong time, leading to the inevitable battle on the balcony overlooking the scenic vat of boiling wax in the workroom.

Mitchell, veteran of such flicks as the sleaze classic *The Toolbox Murders* and the ridiculous *Viva Knievel!*, plays twisted characters with a lot of enthusiasm. Here he gets to chat with wax heads, laugh bitterly a lot, and charge around with an eyepatch and black cloak. That can't correct the bad lighting and muddy sound, or make the interminable chase scenes and ridiculous musical interlude (featuring the T-Bones) any more palatable.

Nightmare in Wax is also known as *Crimes in the Wax Museum*, but should be avoided regardless of its title.

Terror in the Wax Museum

1973, 93 Minutes
Cinerama/Lightning
Director: Georg Fenady
Cast: Ray Milland, Broderick Crawford, Elsa Lanchester
*1/2

With a cast like the one assembled for *Terror in the Wax Museum* you might expect some minimum level of competency, and I suppose that's what you get here—minimum competency. The film's not technically dreadful, like *Nightmare in Wax*, but Milland, Crawford, and the other veterans drag through their roles as if sleepwalking. Elsa Lanchester puts in more effort as the heroine's avaricious guardian, but that isn't nearly enough to liven up this dreary excuse for a film.

When slightly crazed waxworks proprietor John Carradine is murdered, the prime suspect is the statue of Jack the Ripper showcased in his exhibit. Since the story takes place in Victorian England, not long after the dirty deeds of Saucy Jack, many of the locals think it might actually be the work of Ripper himself, done to protest his likeness. Sadly, it's nothing so elaborate, and the plot soon devolves into a standard "Murder, She Wrote" sort of mystery, with ownership of the waxworks as the motive all the suspects share.

There's a sappy romance between Carradine's niece and a police sergeant, an interminable dream sequence, and a deaf-mute hunchbacked assistant (who draws the short straw and ends up belly-flopping into the molten wax pool from the inevitable overlooking ledge). Bing Crosby produced this yawner. Maybe he needed a tax write-off or wanted to give some old friends a few weeks work.

Waxwork

1988, 97 Minutes
Vestron
Director: Anthony Hickox
Cast: Zach Galligan, Deborah Foreman, David Warner
***

In concept, *Waxwork* sounds promising. An evil minion of Eternal Darkness (David Warner) creates a waxworks in which the tableaux are imbued with malevolent power. When one living soul has been trapped in each of these scenes of terror, the entire waxworks come to life and an unstoppable army of monsters is unleashed on the earth. For dramatic storytelling, the people shoved into the tableaux are transported to the setting depicted—Dracula's castle, a werewolf's lair, an Egyptian tomb complete with shuffling mummy. That way the audience gets five or six films in one, and the director gets to do little homages to classic horror movies (a black and white graveyard scene for the zombie tableau and so on).

In the hands of a more capable director, with something better than an exploitive, dunderheaded script, it might have worked. As is, though, *Waxwork* wastes a good premise and a decent cast for very little return. Many of the actors doing time in Anthony Hickox's twisted little flick have experience in genre films—Zach Galligan of Gremlins fame, Dana Ashbrook ("Twin Peaks"), and Miles O'Keeffe (Bo Derek's *Tarzan*). John Rhys-Davies and Patrick Macnee are especially squandered, though Rhys-Davies makes a lot out of a pretty meager cameo.

Waxwork melts down for a lot of reasons. The three most obvious are: totally unlikable characters, consistently misfired humor, and a really twisted subplot involving heroine Deborah Foreman falling for the lash of the Marquis de Sade. Director Hickox put himself in the de Sade "fantasy" sequence (as the English prince), which may explain why he did the movie in the first place.

Weasel Games

Et Tu, Weasel?

by Lester "Weasel" Smith

According to legend, when asked to define the term "human being," the Greek philosopher Plato responded, "A featherless biped." Then some wiseacre handed him a plucked chicken.

Words are awfully shifty things, even at the best of times. Definitions are less a matter of delineating parameters than of pointing in a general direction. That's why, in attempting to define the term "weasel games" in this series of articles, I have opted for discussing various aspects of such games and offering examples from my own experience. If you have played similar games, my descriptions should strike a resonant chord in your memory. And if—heaven forfend—you haven't played any such games before, I hope that these vignettes will pique your interest and encourage you to get involved in one.

The Importance of "Backstabbing"

When I bring up the topic of weasel games around the office, there is always some debate as to what delineates the class. One commonly cited criterion is "backstabbing." In my opinion, a game doesn't *have* to incorporate back-stabbing to earn a weasel designation. But for most people, the two terms seem virtually inseparable.

So what exactly is backstabbing? In the AD&D® game, of course, backstabbing relies upon thieves being so sneaky that their victims don't know they are behind them until it is too late. But the term has a somewhat different meaning in general parlance. In that usage, stabbing people in the back implies that they trust you as a friend so much that they allow you to be behind them with a weapon, and you heartlessly use that friendship to strike them cruelly from behind. Therefore, when my fellow workers speak of backstabbing in weasel games, they are referring to the shifting conditions that create allies of convenience, with the full awareness that those allies could become enemies at any moment—and strike when least expected.

Some Treacherous Examples

In the *Cosmic Encounter* game, players each have a chance to make two attacks on their turn, with the target of each determined by a random draw from the "Destiny Deck." In each attack, other players around the table can be invited in as allies. But the randomness of the Fate Deck means that a person who allies with you on the first attack might actually become the target of the second attack. So much for continued alliance.

The Castle of Magic game (reviewed in DRAGON® magazine #189) makes alliances even more iffy. Everyone starts the game with a secret background defining country of origin, guild membership, and desired position of bell, book, and candle for the grand spell to be cast at the end of the game. As the game progresses, players gain chances to learn secrets about other players' backgrounds. But when a player learns a secret about you, you have no way of knowing what that secret is! Consequently, that player may know that the two of you are deadly enemies in the game, while you are ignorant of the fact. Armed with that knowledge, your enemy may convince you to help with some aspect of the grand spell, only to betray you when the time is ripe. This makes for a wonderfully political game.

But the *Diplomacy* game is undoubtedly the most treacherous of all backstabbing games. (Actually, this game is useful in illustrating quite a number of weasel game aspects, but we'll confine ourselves to discussing backstabbing, for the present.)

At first glance, the *Diplomacy* game appears to be a fairly standard wargame. In this product, armies are maneuvered much as in the *Risk* game, for example. But what sets *Diplomacy* battles apart from those of other games is that there are no dice. An attacker gains territory simply by outnumbering the defender's forces. Considering that everyone starts with the same number of counters, that may seem something of a trick to accomplish.

But this is where the game's title word comes into play. Between each set of combat turns, players spend ten or fifteen minutes away from the table, talking in small groups, trying to convince one another to support their battles. The trick is to make deals in which you gain more advantage than you give away. Not surprisingly, that often involves knowing when an alliance is about to become a liability, and dissolving it just before that happens. Frequently, the first signal that an alliance is dissolved is betrayal of one of its members by another—i.e., the backstab.

Here is a particularly apt example from my own experience. I was playing France, and a friend was playing Russia. Those positions put us on opposite sides of the board (which represents Europe, Northern Asia, and Northern Africa). Consequently, we were natural allies, having nothing to fear from each other as long as there were other players in the middle for us to battle. My friend Russia had sent several fleets through the North Sea and down the western coast of Europe, to finally arrive in the Mediterranean. By this time, I had captured the entire Iberian peninsula, so his fleets were just off my shore; but I didn't worry much, because they were too far from his armies in the North to do any long-term damage to my territories.

In Tunis, however, another player had part of his dwindling forces. I wanted him to do me a favor in Austria. During our diplomatic talks, he agreed to that favor, if I would promise not to invade Tunis. I assented, and my Russian friend added his assurance that if I broke the agreement, he would use his fleets to punish my Iberian homeland. A deal was struck, and Russia and I went away to discuss other things. When the time came for movement and battle, the "Tunisian" fellow kept his promise in Austria.

Then, in a surprise move, *Russia* invaded Tunis, and I treacherously *supported* his attack with some of my units. By the "letter of the law," Russia and I had both kept our promise to Tunis. I did not invade; he did. By doing so, he certainly insured that I wouldn't. Either way, our poor victim lost Tunis to two supposed allies.

It was a perfect backstab. Years later, I'm still ashamed of myself for it. ❑

Adver

Characters for the *Star Wars:*

by Bill

Tyanna Tymb

Template Type: Corporate Executive
Loyalty: To Herself
Height: 1.4 meters
Species: Sullustan
Homeworld: Sullust
Age: 36 Standard Years
Dexterity 2D+2: Blaster 3D, dodge 3D+1; **Knowledge 2D+2:** Alien species 6D, bureaucracy 6D+1, business 6D+2, cultures 4D+1, intimidation 5D+2, languages 4D+1, value 5D+2, willpower 3D+2; **Mechanical 3D+1:** communications 3D+2, repulsorlift operation 4D+1; **Perception 3D+1:** Bargain 6D+2, command 5D+1, con 6D+2, persuasion 5D+2; **Strength 2D+1:** Climbing/jumping 2D+2, stamina 3D+1; **Technical 3D+2:** Computer programming/repair 4D+1, droid repair 3D+2, security 4D+2.
Special Abilities: *Enhanced Senses—Perception* and *search* checks involving vision (in low-light conditions) or hearing receive a +2D bonus.
Force Sensitive?: No
Force Points: 1
Character Points: 8
Dark Side Points: 1
Equipment: Comlink, hold-out blaster (2D+2 damage), datapad, corporate credit account, executive shuttle with private pilot, executive assistant droid.
Quote: "Business is just a more satisfying form of war. The battlefields are different, certainly, and the stakes are greater. But the body counts are the same.

Her pale, jowled face appears cold, cunning, and superiorly intelligent. Mouse-like ears are set attentively atop her head, widely spaced to catch every sound, every nuance of conversation. Her large, expressive eyes glow with inner fire, and her stare has been known to make even a Barabel turn away in fear. She is Tyanna Tymb, a Sullustan, Top OpEx of SoroSuub Corporation's Varada Sector holdings.

As the top operating executive in Varada Sector, Tyanna controls the corporate headquarters on Varada Five and oversees all of SoroSuub's ventures in the seven star systems that comprise the sector. Her ruthless, no-nonsense, business-is-war approach to corporate endeavors has earned her a number of unflattering-yet-accurate titles that her subordinates apply to her when they don't think she's listening—the Dark Lady, Tyanna the Tyrant and Tymb the Despot, among others. Of course, those who slip and call her by one of these titles to her face quickly experience the wrath that has made her feared throughout the seven systems. Publicly, she prefers Top OpEx Tymb, though privately she is fond of "the Dark Lady."

For all of her unrelenting business tactics and fierce negotiation style, Tyanna has some positive traits. She rewards her loyal assistants well, and she does her best to correct the horrendous personnel policies of SoroSuub.

Tyanna moved through the SoroSuub Business Academy at lightspeed, graduating at the top of her class with a bright career ahead of her. Early on, she displayed the qualities that would make her the scourge of the corporate community. She used every trick and scare tactic in the SoroSuub datajournal to discredit and eliminate possible competitors among her fellow students. Everything she did, however, was considered fair and legal by the Academy's hierarchy.

There was one student Tyanna could not shake, though, and she haunted the Sullustan through every semester. They remained in a dead heat as the final tests for graduation approached, and it was anyone's guess who would emerge as the winner in their battle for position and department placement. Worse, as far as Tyanna was concerned, was the nature of her opponent. Alara Fax, who moved through the Academy with all the speed, grace, and expertise of Tyanna, was not even Sullustan. She was human, and to lose to a human in the theater of Sullustan business would be a major disgrace from Tyanna's point of view. So, Tyanna convinced Alara that she was her friend, learned everything she could about the human, then waited to make her move until the days at the Academy dwindled to a precious few.

Alara had one weakness that frustrated her to no end. She could not grasp Sullustan marketing theory no matter how many times she studied the textdocs. She could negotiate a multi-digit deal better than anyone, but the intricacies of "the marketing tri-icosahedra" eluded her. Tyanna offered Alara a solution as the final test drew near—she gave her a data card study aid. Hidden in the programming, however, were the actual answers to the test questions. During the exam, the programming kicked in and the answers started scrolling across Alara's data pad screen. Caught cheating, Alara was expelled from the Academy on the eve of graduation, and Tyanna's primary opponent was effectively removed from the playing field.

Since graduating from the Business Academy, Tyanna has continued to advance quickly. As a junior executive, she started striking deals and earning SoroSuub major amounts of credits almost immediately. It wasn't long before the home office decided to use her

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saries

New Republic Campaign

Slavicsek

Alara Fax

Template Type: Entrepreneur
Loyalty: To Herself
Height: 1.6 meters
Species: Human
Homeworld: Kerig'En
Age: 36 Standard Years
Dexterity 3D: Blaster 4D+1, brawling parry 4D, dodge 5D+1, melee combat 3D+2, melee parry 4D, pick pocket 5D, running 4D+2; **Knowledge 3D+2:** Alien species 4D+2, bureaucracy 5D+1, business 7D+1, intimidation 5D+1, streetwise 5D+2, value 4D+2, willpower 4D+1; **Mechanical 2D+1:** Astrogation 3D+1, space transports 4D+1, swoop operation 4D+2; **Perception 3D+2:** Bargain 5D+2, con 6D+1, forgery 5D+1, hide 5D+1, persuasion 6D+1, sneak 5D+2; **Strength 2D+2:** Brawling 3D+2, climbing/jumping 4D, stamina 3D+2; **Technical 2D+2:** Computer programming/repair 4D+2, first aid 3D+1, security 4D+2.
Force Sensitive?: No
Force Points: 2
Character Points: 5
Dark Side Points: 1
Equipment: Comlink, blaster (4D damage), datapad, 2 stun grenades (4D stun damage), vibroblade (5D+2 damage).
Quote: "Business is fun. Buying, selling, starting new ventures from scratch—that's where the excitement is. When it stops being fun, I'll go into another line of work."

Alara Fax is as beautiful as she is competent at business. Her midnight black hair highlights her fair skin and large, dark eyes. The twinkle of her eyes and the infectious smile that has become her trademark draw people to her the way a large gravity well draws in ships and space debris. And like a gravity well, Alara has been known to keep what she attracts—whatever doesn't burn up on entry, that is. Alara Fax, the human owner and chairperson of Fax Ventures, has a fun-loving, cheerful nature that makes her a joy to deal with and be around. Where Tyanna Tymb uses guile, treachery, and ruthlessness to make and break deals, Alara simply wins people to her side.

Alara started Fax Ventures about four years ago with the credits she earned working for the galaxy's criminal elements. She didn't set out on a life of crime, though. As one of only a handful of non-Sullustans to be admitted to the SoroSuub Business Academy, her future as a corporate wheeler-dealer looked assured until one was accused of cheating on her graduation exams. She was set up by the Sullustan Tyanna Tymb, but there was no way to prove that. To suggest it would make it look like she was trying some desperate ploy to shift the blame. Instead, Alara accepted the ruling of the Academy and left without a certificate of graduation or any hope of finding employment in the massive SoroSuub Corporation.

Her weakness in Sullustan marketing theory aside, Alara learned a great deal at the Business Academy. In addition to all of her lessons, she also learned that friendship is the safest place to hide deceit. It was a lesson she would never forget. Alara was determined, however, to excel beyond anything Tyanna was capable of achieving. For Tyanna was not naturally outgoing and friendly. Alara, who was charming and engaging without even trying, would be able to use friendship as a tool and weapon, wielding it with a grace and expertise that Tyanna could only envy.

With a disgrace as significant as being expelled from the Academy on her record, few legitimate corporations would even grant her an interview, let alone hire her into a position of responsibility and authority. The fringe enterprises, with leaders like Jabba the Hutt, Talon Karrde, Ploovo-Two-For-One, and Stridus Darkov, were more than happy to get someone of her caliber on their team. Alara spent time in each of these organizations, though her longest association was with Stridus. She used his trust, friendship, and credits to

bankroll her own endeavors until she had the means to strike out on her own. That's when she opened Fax Ventures.

With successful investments and operations throughout the Outer Rim Territories, Alara gathered the resources to expand her influence in a new direction. From the moment she left Sullust, Alara has continued to monitor and track Tyanna's progress. She determined where SoroSuub was going to send Tyanna before any executives committed decisions to data pads. The only logical place for someone of Tyanna's talents and ambitions was in the field, in a region marginally under SoroSuub control but with a lot of room for expansion. Alara guessed that place would be Varada system before any orders were given or promotions awarded. With six months of lead time, Alara began to plan for her own expansion into the area.

Alara knew that Tyanna would not be able to settle for a single system. The Sullustan would want to expand her influence throughout the entire Varada Sector. With that in mind, Alara began to study the seven star systems, searching for a credit-making endeavor of galactic proportions to sink her business teeth into. Not only would

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Your Tax Dollars At Work

An AD&D 2nd Edition game adventure for 1st-3rd level PCs

by Rob Nicholls

This adventure is set in the city of Ravens Bluff in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting, though with a few changes it can fit any fantasy world.

The action begins with the PCs being appointed members of the Special Advisory Council Guard, unkindly referred to as "Spags." Intended to serve as a prestigious and useful task force, the Guard has degenerated into a scorned and ineffective agency due to the ineptitude of its director, Bradlie Tagart. For years Bradlie moved from post to post, always using the resources and people at his command in ploys for increasing his own position instead of doing the job. This practice has made him a great manipulator, but a terrible administrator. If not for the political clout he gained by his boot-licking ways, Bradlie would have been kicked out of government years ago.

Recently, Bradlie concocted a daring scheme to better the position of himself and his son, Noland.

William Strong, the young nephew of Lord Regent Thomas Raphiel, is visiting Ravens Bluff, and the Guard is to serve as the child's escort. Bradlie's plan is to spring the orders on the PCs at the last moment and hurry them off to meet a fake nephew he has hired. This "William" will try to lose the PCs in the city sewers while bandits (hired by Noland) kidnap the real nephew. The frustrated PCs will then be arrested and brought before a special meeting of the Advisory Council. Here, Bradlie will accuse the PCs of being incompetent and claim their story of meeting a fake nephew is all to cover up their mistake of going to the "wrong" address. The PCs will be suspended pending a decision by the Council. Bradlie and Noland then plan to meet with their hired thugs and "rescue" the nephew to gain fame and a sizeable reward.

The PCs must uncover the plot, rescue the nephew, and expose the Tagarts for the corrupt individuals they are.

Players' Introduction

You have been appointed members of that elite organization, the Special Advisory Council Guard. You walk at the elbow of the rich and powerful. You are the vigilant protectors and servants of one of the most august political bodies in Ravens Bluff. As such, you are respected, revered, and well-rewarded.

And if you believe all that, my brother will sell you Zhentil Keep and the Boarskyr Bridge. Cheap.

Respected? Respected people aren't jeered at and called "Spags" by beggars and urchins. Revered? Revered people don't get sympathetic looks from others when you announce for whom you work. Well-rewarded? Rewarded people line their pockets with gold, not with copper and the occasional silver piece.

Let's face it, you will never do well for yourselves as long as Bradlie Tagart is in charge of the Guard. What an imbecile! His preoccupation with increasing his personal status has made a shambles of this organization. How many times has he handed out assignments at the last minute, giving you no time to prepare? How many projects have you completed only to find they were not for the Advisory Council but to earn Bradlie some political favor? How many times has he sent you out to get a cup of sand and you come back to find you were supposed to be getting a bucket of water? Of course, all of these mistakes are all your fault. Bradlie Tagart is perfect and infallible. Just ask him.

Anyway, until something better comes along (nothing could be much worse) you're sticking around because you need the money. As one of your predecessors once stated, "Nobody works here because they WANT to; its because they HAVE to." Of course, some of the guards stick around for a chance to prove what a creep Tagart really is. You are gathered in the common area of the Guard office mulling over these and other things when the door to Bradlie's office suddenly bursts open. He hurries out, looks at you all as if you had three heads and were drooling slime, and then shouts wildly, "WHAT ARE YOU DOING JUST SITTING AROUND! You have to meet Lord Raphiel's nephew at Embrol Sludge's Eatery and Shell Shoppe in 20 minutes! Oh, what am I going to do? Don't sit there like idiots staring at me! Get off your lazy ends and MOVE!"

Hopefully, one of the PCs will ask for a few details, such as the nephew's name, what he looks like, and what they are supposed to do when they meet him. Bradlie hurriedly says the boy's name is William Strong. He is slender with freckles and brown hair, and that the Guard is supposed to be his escort while the youngster tours the city. After that, Bradlie will be too concerned with getting the PCs out and on their way to answer anything else. If anyone thinks this is strange, remind them that this is Bradlie's normal operating procedure. It normally takes 15 minutes to get to the Eatery from the Guard office, thus they have some spare time, but not much.

Rush Hour Traffic

Although it normally takes 15 minutes to get to from the office to Embrol Sludge's Eatery and Shell Shoppe, this morning it will take longer.

You are making good time down the streets, and, once you pass through the Open Air Farmers Market, you should arrive at the Eatery with a minute or two to spare.

However, any hopes of a speedy arrival are dashed as you round a corner and see the crowd which fills the market. Not even at Jack Mooney's Circus have you seen such a packed mass of people stalls. The sale going on may be good for the merchants, but certainly not for you.

You have a little more than 10 minutes left to get to the Eatery. What are you going to do?

Here is a list of some options the PCs might consider. As the DM, you should give a close (although not necessarily exact) estimate of how much time each option would require, but only if a player asks.

* Going around the market and avoiding the crowd. Time: 20 minutes.

* Pushing their way headlong through the crowd. Time: 30 minutes.

* Announcing that they are members of the Special Advisory Council Guard and demand that they be let pass. Time: 40 minutes, as a few people will shout, "Here come the Spags!" and purposely impede the PCs' progress.

* Announcing that they are members of the City Watch and demand that they be let pass. Time: 45 minutes, as it will earn them not only all the grief listed in the previous option, but also a five-minute lecture from a nearby Watch sergeant on the various fines and punishments for posing as a member of the City Watch.

* Traveling along the tops of the stalls. Time: 15 minutes, but this will require crossing at least six stalls. Each PC must make a Dexterity check for every stall to cross it safely. A failed check means the character has slipped and will fall into the crowd, bringing the stall down with him. These unfortunate PCs can quickly climb back to the stall tops with a successful Dexterity check. Otherwise they will be beset by irate customers and an angry merchant who will detain the PC until he or she pays for the damages. These PCs will not be allowed back up to the stall tops, but will be roughly passed overhead by the crowd and thrown to the feet of those Guard members who were dexterous.

The options listed are by no means all of the possibilities, and many players will no doubt come up with clever, unusual, or even magical schemes. However, you should not allow the PCs just to argue over various methods. The characters are on a tight schedule and should be constantly reminded that time is ticking away.

A Child Shall Lead Them

Depending upon how they handled the crowd at the Open Air Farmers Market, the PCs may actually arrive on time at the Eatery. However, as they will soon realize, their punctuality or lack thereof will make little difference.

As you approach the Eatery, you see a young man of about thirteen summers standing impatiently outside. Dressed in expensive-looking attire, he matches the vague description Bradlie gave you. Indeed, as you come closer, the boy lifts his freckled nose and asks, "Ain't you the guys . . . I mean, are you not the escort for whom I have been awaiting?"

Once the PCs identify themselves as the Special Advisory Council Guard, the young man will begin berating them about being late, the sloppiness of their dress, their lack of breeding, and anything else he can think of. He will identify himself as William Strong, nephew of the Lord Regent. Actually, his name is Phil Krisp, an imposter hired by Bradlie. Phil knows enough about Lord Raphiel (such as his description, his job, where he lives) to answer most casual questions. If asked anything of a personal nature, he will say it is none of their business and berate the PCs about prying into the affairs of their betters.

However, if asked why the nephew of the Lord Regent was picked up outside a restaurant instead of at the Regent's house, Phil will hesitate and mumble something about security precautions. If pressed, he claims his uncle ordered it and again, it is none of their affair.

Phil's manner of speech will often shift, ranging from the haughty tones of a snob to the rough language of a street urchin. These things should put the brighter players on their guard.

"William" claims a desire to see the waterfront and leads the PCs to the docks. Once there, he wanders about looking at boats, throwing rocks at sea gulls, and occasionally making insulting comments about various individuals. After the third or fourth such comment, the PCs will gain some unwanted attention.

As you pass by an open sewer grate, you suddenly find yourselves surrounded by a dozen tough-looking boys. A scruffy looking ball of dirty white fur that might be a dog growls at you from behind the largest boy's legs. The youngest boy looks to be about half William's age, while the oldest could hardly be more than 15. These are obviously not babes, however. Their faces hold grim smiles, and in their eyes you can see years of hard living, of sleeping in the streets or under docks, of eating scraps thrown out to dogs. You also see a great deal of annoyance, and perhaps a little hatred.

"Oy!" shouts the oldest boy, "Ye be hanging out with Spags now, eh Phil? That make you good enough to come back and make smart 'marks against us, eh? Well, me and the mates here think maybe you should be paying for your smart talk. We'll take coin or blood; your choice."

"William" claims the boys have mistaken him for someone else and demands that the PCs disperse the rabble. If pressed on the subject, he says the boys are just hoping for a handout from a rich person such as himself.

Actually, these boys are members of a gang that Phil used to run with until he was kicked out. He is using the presence of the PCs as an opportunity to get a small amount of revenge on the youths.

Although they outnumber the PCs two-to-one, the gang members realize that they are no match for the PCs and do not really wish to start a fight. However, they are willing to risk it for a shot at Phil. Should the PCs offer each member a few coppers to move on (Phil will object, as he wishes to see the gang thrashed), they will accept and combat can be avoided. Otherwise, the gang will attack. The dog snarls and barks at the PCs, but doesn't attack effectively.

Gang Members (12): Int Average; AL N (E); AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 2, 2, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5, 6, 6, 6, 7, 9; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg pummel; SZ M; ML 10.

The PCs should carefully consider how much force to use in this fight. While they would be within their rights to use deadly force, it would not be good or moral to do so if it could be avoided. It would also not be good for the Guards' already poor public image if they were to become known as slayers of children and little white dogs. Therefore, most players should opt for one of the subduing combat methods outlined in the *Players Handbook*, pages 97-98. If a PC wishes to inflict lethal damage, allow him to do so. But such actions should earn him many dark looks from bystanders as well as his fellow characters.

Down the Drain

As the battle (or discussion, if the PCs settle things peacefully) comes to an end, Phil decides the time has come to lose the PCs. He leaps into the sewers and makes his escape, using the *dust of disappearance* that Bradlie gave him.

Just as you finish dealing with the street gang, William cries out, "So long, Spag-heads!" As you turn in his direction, he sprinkles something over his head and vanishes.

To have a chance at stopping Phil, the PCs must block the sewer grate IMMEDIATELY. Any player who has his character block the grate can attempt an overbearing attack (see PHB, page 98), at a −4 penalty and any penalties for armor as listed on page 97, table 57. Success indicates that the character has tripped and pinned Phil. If more than one PC blocks the grate, treat it as a combined attack, using the character with the best base THAC0. Even if that character has a hefty armor penalty, roll once for the single character, who gets a +1 bonus for each extra PC involved.

Allow the PCs no more than 10 seconds to declare actions. If they are slow, Phil gets away clean. Note that Phil has initiative and becomes *invisible* before the PC can do anything. Unless a PC has a *detect invisibility* spell running, Phil can't be hit by spells such as *magic missile* or *charm person*, though area effect spells could get him.

If the PCs overbear Phil, they can capture him so long as they are careful to keep a grip on him. If a PC does not specifically state he is holding onto Phil, the boy squirts out from under the pile when the PCs return to their feet. Only a thin elf could follow the boy without opening the grate. The grating is very heavy, and even a strong PC or group of PCs will need a few minutes to open it, giving Phil ample time to escape.

If the PCs let Phil get away, read the following:

Sewage of a terribly potent vintage flies up and splatters upon you all. As you quickly peer into the dark aperture, you can see no trace of the boy in the odorous tunnels. What a revolting development this is! Do you give chase through the smelly muck? Or would you rather tell Bradlie that

you lost the Lord Regent's nephew down a sewer grate?

The PCs should definitely have their doubts about "William" now and will probably give chase so they can question him. Even if they have no suspicions, the PCs should chase the boy out of sense of duty or for fear of a reprimand by Bradlie.

Phil is *invisible* and knows the tunnels well. Smart PCs should realize that wandering very far into the dark and damp maze of corridors will probably get them lost. Phil cannot be tracked with infravision; beyond 10 feet the misty atmosphere of the sewers masks temperature differences.

Furthermore, the stench in this section is quite overpowering to those unfamiliar with it. Each character must make a saving throw versus poison for every three rounds that he is in the sewer or become violently ill (-4 to all dice rolls). This should encourage the characters to vacate the foul area with haste. PCs will be restored to normal after a couple of rounds in the fresh air.

If the PCs decide to blunder on after Phil, be sure to inquire about their light sources and choices of direction. The sewers are such a trackless maze that no map is necessary. You should simply give out directions at random until it becomes obvious that any mapping by the players will be useless.

Leaving the sewers should be no problem, as there are numerous grates in this area. Should the PCs exit through a different grate than the one they entered, an open doors roll will be necessary to tug the grate free.

If the PCs captured Phil before he dove into the sewers, the boy tries to continue playing his William role and accuses them of telling the "ruffians" where he would be so they could beat him up and take his money. He's a closed-mouthed little urchin, and he won't reveal what he's really up to. If the PCs treat him as a prisoner, he maintains his William role and threatens them with his uncle's wrath. If the PCs still have not tumbled to him, Phil "apologizes" for doubting them, and promises to act "as a highborn Ravens Bluff lad should." Then he tries to escape again. In this case, just roll initiative, and give Phil a −4 bonus if he's still *invisible*; if he wins initiative, Phil sprints into a crowd and is gone.

A Trying Experience

After their encounter at the sewer grate, the PCs should realize that something was wrong with the young man they had been escorting. Read the following if Phil escaped into the sewer:

Your little ordeal with the sewers has left you with sodden clothing and troubled thoughts. How are you going to explain to Bradlie that you lost Lord Raphiel's nephew? In the sewer no less! But William didn't fall into the sewer, he jumped. And he vanished into that stinking abyss too quickly and easily. Something about this situation (other than yourselves) just doesn't smell right.

Your thoughts are interrupted by the approach of several men. Their uniforms mark them as members of the City Watch. While this would normally be a heartening sight, you are all dismayed to see Bradlie's son Noland leading the patrol.

Good old Noland Tagart, a man of such resourcefulness and intelligence that he'd be scraping the barnacles off boats if his father hadn't gotten him a job with the Watch. When Bradlie isn't in the office, you can count on Noland stopping by to give a friendly smile, make some small talk, and then run to tell his father what you were doing in his absence.

However, Noland's smile is more wolfish than friendly now. Wrinkling his nose, he marches up and says, "Been playing in the sewers, eh Spags? You'll all make a fine sight at the meeting, I must say. Come along, Spags. You're under arrest."

If the PCs ask for details, Noland smugly tells them they are being charged with "Gross Negligence and Dereliction of Duty." The details concerning these charges will be explained to the PCs at the special meeting of the Advisory Council to which he is escorting them. After that, all the characters can get out of Noland are sneers. If they ask to clean up before going to the meeting, Noland says that they are to report to the Council at once. "It will teach you not to play in the sewers."

If the PCs still have Phil, read the following:

Your ordeal with this screaming brat is beginning to wear on you. First he tried to jump into a fetid sewer, than he tried to dash away and lose himself in a crowd, and now he's telling everyone within blocks that he's being abused and abducted. If you stopped to tie a bootlace, the civilians probably would lynch you. Bradlie Tagart has a lot to answer for this time.

William's cries and protestations seem to have drawn you some additional—and very unwanted—attention. Several men approach. Their uniforms mark them as members of the City Watch. While this would normally be a heartening sight, you are dismayed to see Bradlie's son Noland leading the patrol.

Good old Noland Tagart, a man of such resourcefulness and intelligence that he'd be scraping the barnacles off boats if his father had not gotten him a job with the Watch. When Bradlie isn't in the office, you can count on Noland stopping by to give a friendly smile, make some small talk, and then run to tell his father what you were doing in his absence.

Noland's smile is more wolfish than friendly now. Wrinkling his nose, he marches up and says, "Been playing a little game of tag, eh Spags? You'll all make a fine sight at the meeting, I must say. Come along, Spags, you're under arrest. You stick with me, my boy," he says to Phil, taking him by the arm.

Point out that the 15 men in Noland's patrol are not street thugs but armed regulars of the City Watch. The PCs should realize that any fight with the Watch will be more trouble than its worth and agree to go along. However, if they do decide to fight, it is their choice.

City Watchmen (15): Int Average to High; AL NG; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3 (F3); hp 25 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 15.

Fighting the Watch will result in the arrival of 15 more regulars (statistics as above) if needed, and the PCs being captured and taken to the Council meeting in chains as well as under guard.

You find yourselves in one of the great meeting chambers of the Advisory Council. You feel embarrassment at your filthy condition as you are ushered into

this finely-decorated room of paneled walls and marble columns. The stern expressions on the portraits are mirrored in the faces of the Lords waiting to greet you. A few noses wrinkle, a few whispers are uttered, and then a profound silence comes over them as you are lead to your seats. Not since your younger days has any of you been the target of such disapproval. Obviously, the Council is displeased with you.

A door to the side opens and admits your director. Bradlie gives you all a look of contempt and then meekly speaks to the assembled Lords.

"My esteemed councilors, I am most ashamed and embarrassed to be here. I have just been informed of the failure of my subordinates and would take all blame and guilt for their stupidity if I could."

Bradlie then whirls upon you and shouts, "However, I cannot accept the blame for these miserable persons. Their incompetence has endangered the life of a young, innocent child. Oh, if only I were allowed to hire worthy individuals, people with the brains to follow simple orders!"

The PCs are accused of failing to meet young William Strong, a rotund child with curly blonde hair, at the residence of Lord Raphiel and thereby allowing the boy to be kidnapped. They have been brought before the Council to explain their failure. Allow the players to relate their story to the Council. Try to cultivate a serious courtroom atmosphere, even though this is a council hearing and not a trial. Calm and courteous behavior should be better received than angry accusations and denials. Each PC will be asked to relate his or her version of the events.

Of course, Bradlie will deny sending them to the Eatery instead of Lord Raphiel's residence. He will accuse the PCs of making up their story of meeting a false nephew as a ploy to hide their guilt. "Where is this nephew you met? Down the sewers? A likely story!" If the PCs still had Phil in their custody when arrested and they mention this to the council, Bradlie still is contemptuous: "What!? This street urchin mistaken for William Raphiel? Obviously this boy has been employed—by these mountebanks—to add credence to their ridiculous story!" Phil responds by acting another role—he cries and shivers so hard his knees knock together. He's doing a very convincing imitation of a frightened child.

When the PCs finish their account, the Lords announce that the PCs are suspended from duty pending a decision by the Council. This decision will be handed down in one hour, and the PCs are expected to return at that time. "However, " one Lord tells the PCs, "It does not look good for you. Perhaps you should find a good lawyer—hopefully one without a sense of smell." The characters are warned that the Watch will be on the lookout for any attempt to leave the city. After that, the PCs will be released on their own recognizance.

If Phil was present at the meeting, he is mysteriously absent when the PCs are released. If the PCs ask one of the guards where the boy went, they learn that Noland quietly let him out a side door about five minutes ago.

Crime and Punishment

After being released from the hearing, you have your first chance to actually take a moment and examine two important facts.

Bradlie lied to you about where to meet William and about what the boy really looked like. A fake William was ready to meet you, keep you occupied, and then lose you by fleeing into the sewers.

It's obvious that you've been set up. The question is, what are you going to do about it?

Let the players discuss their options for a minute or so, then read the following:

As you ponder your futures outside the council chambers, a smartly dressed, eager-looking half-elf presents himself with a bow. "Well met, thou under-appreciated servants of Ravens Bluff. I am Robyn Pryce, and I have some small skill in persuading the disgruntled to be forgiving. Judging from what went inside chambers just now, I'd say you need an advocate. I offer my services, for a small retainer of course."

"Robyn Pryce" actually is Mortimer Mittlemer, one of Ravens Bluff's most notorious con artists. He sees the PCs as easy pickings. He reveals the following if the PCs converse with him:

* The charge against them is quite serious, and Bradlie Tagart is likely to set them up as scapegoats to advance himself. (True, but obvious.)

* He assumes the PCs are innocent, and thinks he has a good chance to get them off, provided they can accompany him to his office to answer a few questions and sign a few papers allowing him to act on their behalf. (Mortimer knows they're innocent, as he has been using *ESP* on them. The council also knows they're innocent, at least of complicity in the kidnapping, as they have access to various divination spells, too. The real question facing the PCs is whether they are guilty of gross stupidity or negligence. Actually the worst thing that could happen to the PCs is that they could be fired and disgraced.)

* The PCs should let him look after their affairs while they go home and clean themselves up. (This is the very worst thing they could do).

If the PCs refuse "Robyn's" offer, or refuse to talk to him, he follows them discreetly and creates an incident:

Smooth-talking half-elven lawyers are not what you need in this case. You'll handle this yourself. You stride purposefully down the street, considering your next move. Your thoughts, however, are interrupted by a frenzied scream: "Call the watch! Monsters in the city!" Panicked citizens are fleeing in all directions. "By all the powers!" shouts one shopkeeper as he shutters his store. "Where did they come from?"

They you spot the catalyst for all the ruckus, four large humanoids with hyena faces, grey skin, and straw-colored hair. They ignore the startled civilians and move directly toward you, though you hardly are the easiest pickings on the street.

The monsters are gnolls, brought into being with Mortimer's *monster summoning II* spell. The conniving mage drank his *potion of speed*, got ahead of the PCs, and laid this little trap for them. He intends to stage a dramatic "rescue" of the PCs in his Robyn Pryce guise. The combat goes as follows:

Round 1: Mortimer, under the effects of a *potion of speed* and an *Improved invisibility spell*, casts *monster summoning II* and directs the four gnolls it produces to attack the PCs. The PCs see the gnolls about 40 feet

away and moving toward them; they can take no action yet.

Round 2: The gnolls close and melee the PCs. The PCs might have time to launch missile attacks if they win initiative. If the PCs declare missile attacks and lose initiative, they must spend the remainder of the round changing weapons. If the PCs think the gnolls are illusory and attempt to disbelieve them, they lose all attacks and the gnolls receive a +2 "to hit" bonus against them.

Round 3: The gnolls continue to melee. Mortimer casts *demi-shadow monsters* and creates a troll, which immediately charges the PCs from an alley about 15 feet away. The PCs see it immediately. Attempts to disbelieve receive a −4 penalty (−2 from the spell itself, −1 because Mortimer is an illusionist, and −1 because the PCs have just encountered "real" summoned monsters). The PCs must declare they are disbelieving to get a roll at all. Note also that the troll still can hurt the PCs even if they disbelieve (see PHB, page 167).

Round 4: The troll joins the melee, while Mortimer circles around behind the PCs.

Round 5: The troll and surviving gnolls melee the PCs. Mortimer casts an *audible glamer* spell, and the PCs hear harp music behind them. The duration on the *potion of speed* expires.

Round 6: Mortimer, still disguised as Robyn Pryce and now visible, runs up the street, harp in hand, and joins the PCs' rear rank. He tells the PCs to stop attacking the troll so he can charm it.

Round 7: If the PCs don't stop attacking the troll, "Robyn" shouts at them to stop, because they are preventing the charm, he suggests they simply parry the beast's blows.

Round 8: "Robyn" strums a chord or two on his harp, and the troll stops attacking. The chord is not musical, but only PCs who are specifically listing to the harp can tell this. The troll stops fighting. If the PCs are attacking, they hit it automatically and it falls to the ground. If the PCs aren't attacking it, the troll walks up to Robyn and bows its head, which Robyn promptly strikes off with a short sword.

If the PCs are having difficulty with the gnolls, Robyn eliminates them, too:

Afterward Robyn helps the PCs burn the troll. Robyn suggests that the PCs' enemy must want them dead pretty bad. He points out that it's very tough to smuggle monsters into the city. Shortly afterward, the city watch arrives to take charge of the situation. They question the PCs, then invite them to move along.

Robyn once again offers to help them win their case. If they refuse again, he smiles, and asks them if they'd really enjoy breaking rocks for the next 20 years. If they still don't agree, he leaves, cursing them for their "stupidity."

Gnolls (4): Int Low; AL CE; AC 5 (10); MV 9; HD 2; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (weapon); SZ L; ML 11.

Troll (1): Int Low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 33; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 5/8-5/8-6-12; SD regenerates 3 hp/round starting the 3rd round after taking damage; SZ L; ML 14.

Hooked

If the PCs agree to hire "Robyn Pryce" as their lawyer, he leads them to a small loft a few blocks from the council chamber. He invites them to sit and starts rummaging around in a desk.

> "I think your case is a pretty simple one," says Robyn. "But is there anything I should know about it? Something you didn't mention in chambers?" The half elf raises his eyebrows.

Allow the PCs to waste as much time as they want in pouring out their troubles to Mortimer. When the PCs are finished read the following.

> "Excellent!" exclaims Robyn. "Not only can I get you cleared, I think we just might catch that crooked Bradlie Tagart and his toady of a son, too. However, to pursue this case, I'll need you to empower me to make certain motions and inquires on your behalf. Normally I would charge at least 600 gold pieces for such work, but the Tagarts are crooks, and I want their hides. I will, of course, need something to cover my expenses. Let's see, I'll need about 3 gold to cover materials and at least another 25 to, shall we say, pay certain fees and tariffs?"

If the PCs refuse to pay, or start to haggle, Robyn puts his head in his hands: "Please good people! I can't do this thing for any less! Okay, I'll skip lunch for next week and do it for 20 gold!" When the PCs Finally Pay:

> Robyn produces six contracts. "These are powers of attorney," he says. "They give me the right to act as your advocate, to argue your case before the council, and to collect a fee—which you've already agreed to pay. My actions on your part cannot be legal and will not be recognized by the council or any court in Ravens Bluff without your signature, or mark if you don't write." He hands a long, official-looking document to each of you. They are made of crisp, new papyrus.

What's Really Going On Here

The contracts the PCs have been given assign all their property to Mortimer Mittlemer, in return for services already rendered. Mortimer is hoping to the PCs will blindly sign the documents and hand them over. If they do read them, they encounter a section of *illusionary script* and must save vs. spells at −1 (Wisdom adjustment applies) or sign the contract and hand it over anyway.

If Mortimer is found out, he unveils a *continual darkness* spell before the PCs can do anything (treat this as an ambush). Then he uses his *dimension door* or *shadow door* to escape, taking the PCs' money and maybe a few contracts with him. The round after the *darkness* spell is released, Mortimer has a −2 initiative bonus. All attacks against him are at −4. Mortimer's prime motivation is to escape, and he probably should, unless the PCs are exceptionally sharp and lucky to boot. (To kill or capture Mortimer, they must beat him on initiative on the first round and disrupt his *dimension door* spell. Thereafter, they must disrupt his *shadow door* spell, and successfully melee him to death or unconsciousness.

The PCs are free to search the office after Mortimer is gone. The only thing they find, however, is a bottle of ink, some sealing wax, and a few quill pens. If the PCs question the neighbors or the landlord, they learn only that the office was rented by a newcomer named Robyn Pryce, an untalented bard.

If the PCs don't tumble to Mortimer's scam, Robyn tells them to go home, get cleaned up, and meet him at the council chambers when its time for their hearing. Neither Robyn or Bradlie shows up for the session, and the PCs are summarily drummed out of the Guard for "gross stupidity."

Decisions

After the shenanigans at the council chambers are over, the PCs might do several things:

* They could go home and get cleaned up. As the DM, you should point out that by the time they all went to their homes and returned it would be time to hear the Council's decision.

* They could attempt to find and confront Bradlie. However, a quick search will reveal that he and Noland have disappeared and no one knows where they went. If the PCs check their own office, it is empty, as Bradlie and Noland have yet to arrive with the kidnapped nephew.

* They could look for the fake nephew. This is the PCs' best bet. Hopping back into the sewers will only get them more dirty, but a trip back to the docks will prove most valuable, as the PCs will have little trouble finding Phil. If the PCs go to the docks, read the following:

> You've only just returned to the docks when who should come running up to you but the little boy you know as "William." His fine clothes are torn and his nose dribbles blood. Eyes wide, he screams, "You gotta help me. Don't let 'em kill me. Help me! Help me!"

Phil is being chased by the gang members from an earlier encounter. They will pull up short upon seeing the PCs, but will maintain their proximity. This situation may appear to put the PCs in an excellent position to get information from Phil; however, the lad is not dim. Despite his fear of the gang, he knows the trouble the PCs are in and is fairly sure that he is their only lead. Therefore, any threat to turn him over to the gang will be answered by, "Then you'll never find the real nephew." Phil will settle for safe passage from the waterfront and a little money in exchange for his information, but he will try for more if he can get it. Use your imagination concerning Phil's demands. However, he and the PCs should eventually reach a settlement.

Once Phil has been lead to safety, he explains that a guy matching Bradlie's description hired and briefed him to impersonate William Strong. Furthermore, Phil overheard Bradlie tell a trio of tough-looking guys to snatch the real nephew and meet with Bradlie later. When asked where they are to meet, Phil smiles and try to get a few more coins out of the PCs. Whether he gets them, Phil will eventually tell the characters the location of the meeting—the office of the Special Advisory Council Guard.

The Jig Is Up

If the PCs have successfully found Phil Krisp and discovered the real nephew's location, they will have only twenty minutes before they are to return to the Council. They have that long to confront and defeat Bradlie.

> As the sands of time fall away to be lost in the past, you hurry back to the office. Considering all the times Bradlie has berated, chastised, and mentally jerked your chains there, it is only fitting that it be the site of your confrontation.
>
> Upon your arrival, you find the door is locked. Fortunately, you still retain your keys. With a quick turn and push, the door swings wide and you flow into the room. There before you, with looks of panic and fear on their usually pompous faces, stand Bradlie and Noland. Behind them are six men holding a large sack. Judging by the movements within, it holds the captive nephew.
>
> With a sudden shriek, Bradlie screams, "Well, just don't stand there like the stupid morons you are! Go and GET THEM!" At that, the thugs drop the sack and charge at you.

Brigands (6): Int Low; AL NE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3; hp 24, 20, 18, 17, 17, 15; THAC0 18; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-8; SA +1 "to hit" +2 damage from long sword specialization; SZ M; ML 11

Noland will fight only to defend Bradlie, and Bradlie will not fight at all. In fact, he will claim that he and his son had arrested the kidnappers and were just about to release William when the PCs burst in. At that point, a patrol of the City Watch will arrive to escort everyone back to the Council.

If the PCs come here without looking for Phil first, they find the place locked and empty. Nobody knows where Bradlie and Noland are. If they carefully search the place, however, they find a windowless room in the basement. The door has a heavy lock, but is open now. Inside, they find a small bed, a jug of water, and a set of chains. This is where Bradlie and Noland plan to keep the real William while they negotiate for his release or stage his "rescue." Further searching reveals a large stock of iron rations in Bradlie's office—enough to feed a 12-year-old boy for about two weeks.

Epilogue

Once again the PCs will be lead into the impressive council chambers and asked to explain themselves. They should use this opportunity to outline Bradlie's treachery. If they thought to keep Phil with them, they can persuade him to tell his part of the story. Bradlie and Noland will claim that the kidnappers confessed that the PCs were behind the plot and that they are the real criminals. But the most important evidence will be presented by the nephew William Strong. For although he has spent most of the day tied up in a sack, he distinctly remembers hearing the Tagarts' voices speaking in league with the kidnappers.

Bradlie and Noland will be suspended and turned over to the City Watch while the Council debates. The PCs will be reinstated to their positions with the promise that a more competent director will be assigned to them. And lastly, each will be given 25 gold.

In addition, Lord Regent Thomas Raphiel offers the PCs any two of the following, to be divided as they see fit:

* Two *potions of extra healing*

* Four gems worth 200 gold each

* 20 *arrows +1*

* A *dagger +2*

* One set of *banded mail +1*

* One block of *incense of meditation*

* A gold and jade ring worth 600 gold; this item will be sized to fit one character and will be inscribed with the words: "With thanks from Lord Thomas and William Raphiel

Any PC who signed one of Mortimer's contracts and didn't get it back has forfeited all legal rights to his property. Tell the PC to cross off all his equipment except clothing and the 25 gold he got from the council. If the player objects, tell the PCs that a large contingent of properly licensed, private guards has arrived to confiscate the property. Ask the PC what he's going to do about it. Fighting doesn't work. The

PC is arrested, but released, for disorderly conduct. Non-violent resistance automatically lands the PC in a civil court where Mortimer's lawyer tries to defend the contracts. The PCs easily can prove they were duped and get the contract declared invalid, but the effort costs them 2d4x10 gold each. If a PC doesn't have that much, the PC begins his next adventure owing the difference to the city.

In the unlikely event that the PCs captured or killed Mortimer, the PCs are awarded 500 gold and Mortimer's *ring of protection +1*. The rest of Mortimer's items are held by the city. (Mortimer successfully recovers them after paying a series of fines.

NPCs

Bradlie Tagart
STR 13, INT 13; WIS 9; DEX 14; CON 18; CHA 14; AL NE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3 (F3); hp 17; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 11

Weapon proficiencies: dagger, short sword, club, short bow, knife

Nonweapon proficiencies: gaming (14), running (12), reading/writing Common (16)

Bradlie Tagart is 59 years old, 5′ 10″ tall and weighs 165 pounds. His brown hair is streaked with gray and his face is twisted with a mass of wrinkles. Bradlie has been in government service all of his life, learning not only which forms to fill out but whose brass to kiss. Concerned only with his own personal status, Bradlie has used every post entrusted to him to build up political favors instead of doing his job. This has brought him under attack several times from other bureaucrats and politicians, but Bradlie has always managed to pull together enough strings to save his hide. This has given Bradlie two things; a growing sense of paranoia and the feeling that no matter how badly he screws up, he will always be able to pull his bacon out of the fire. This has led him to concoct more and more radical plans of advancement. Bradlie is also slightly addled. His mood can swing from one of calm, stately grace to that of a hysterical child. However, he never directs the latter toward his superiors, only his subordinates. Bradlie tries to avoid encounters against superior numbers, preferring to stir up trouble in hopes of separating his targets and attacking them individually. He always wears an ornate and ugly suit of *leather +1*.

Noland Tagart
STR 16, INT 10; WIS 6; DEX 14; CON 16; CHA 14; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 1 (F1); hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 10

Weapon proficiencies: dagger, long sword, club, long bow

Nonweapon proficiencies: gaming (14), reading/writing Common (13)

Noland Tagart is 36 years old, 6' tall and weighs 200 lbs. With his broad shoulders and curly brown hair, he appears to be quite a dashing figure. Unfortunately, Noland does not have the brains and common sense to make use of his physical ability. Noland has ambition but not the mental faculties to achieve his desired ends. This (along with having Bradlie as a father) has turned Noland into a very taciturn individual. Whenever an opportunity arises to display superiority, Noland will jump at it. Noland relies upon his father to provide all the necessities of his life. Everything from his job to the color of his underwear is decided by Bradlie. Thus Noland, the dutiful son, will go to great lengths to protect his father, the source of these benefits. Little does he know that he has been raised as his father's lackey and stooge and that Bradlie would sacrifice him in an instant if necessary.

Phil Krisp
STR 12, INT 14; WIS 13; DEX 16; CON 13; CHA 13; AL CN; AC 8; MV 12; HD 1 (T1); hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SZ M; ML 15

Weapon proficiencies: dagger, knife

Nonweapon proficiencies: jumping (16), gaming (13), tumbling (16), read and write Common (17)

Thief abilities: PP 30, OP 30, RT 10, MS 30, HS 25, DN 20, CW 70, RL 10

Phil Krisp is 4′ 6″ tall and weighs 100 pounds. He is a slender boy with brown hair and freckles. While not especially bright, his quick wit and imagination show that Phil has the makings of an excellent actor. Orphaned very young, Phil has made the rounds with the urchins and beggars about town, as well as a few of the street gangs. Phil is always willing to make a quick copper and is not above a childish bit of petty spite or revenge.

Mortimer Mittlemer
STR 9, INT 14; WIS 16; DEX 17; CON 10; CHA 10; AL CN; AC 1; MV 12; HD 9 (W9); hp 41; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SZ M; ML 14

Weapon proficiencies: dagger, staff

Nonweapon proficiencies: read/write Common, Thorass (15); local history (11), riding, land-based (horses) (19), appraising (14)

Spells carried: *cantrip, sleep* (x2), *feather fall, audible glamer, fog cloud, scare, ESP, mirror image, suggestion* (x2), wraithform, spectral force, dimension door, monster summoning II, improved invisibility, demi-shadow monsters, shadow door

Magical items: *hat of disguise, bracers of defense AC 5, dagger +3, ring of protection +1, ring of animal friendship, oil of slipperiness, potion of speed, continual darkness* (cast on a coin)

In his "Robyn Price" guise, Mortimer appears to be a half-even bard, about 45 years old (still pretty young for a half elf). He intends to convince the PCs he can help them out of their predicament.

Mortimer has a small cadre of toadies, shills, and assistants, although none of then actually appear in this adventure (except a possible cameo by his wife, Marilyn, a thief). Most of them are loyal to him out of fear, greed, or ignorance. ❑

Tyanna Tymb

Continued from page 16

in the field. Two years ago, during the height of the galactic civil war, she was assigned to handle the SoroSuub facilities in Varada system.

Though her people have thrown their support into the New Republic, Tyanna has always favored the methods and vast resources of the Empire. She continues to trade with the Imperial remnants, though in a less-visible fashion than before. She has an especially close relationship with Moff Poliff of Tunka Sector and with Captain Fessix of the Star Destroyer *Discord*. She regularly provides these two with details concerning her Republic customers.

A rival from the past has recently returned to compete with Tyanna. When Tyanna purchased the trade and resource rights to the seventh star system in the Varada Sector, she found that one planet and its neighboring asteroid field were already under contract to a small independent company called Fax Ventures—a company headed by Tyanna's "old friend" Alara Fax. For the sake of completeness, Tyanna wants the corporate rights to the entire system. She especially wants what currently belongs to her old rival. Never mind the rich deposits of aluminite and corax ore waiting to be extracted from the asteroids, or the lush jungles of Bestal Three ripe for exploitation. The goal to this deal, as far as Tyanna is concerned, is to take away Alara's newest toy. Her associates are already busily scanning textdocs and infiltrating Alara's headquarters. ❑

Alara Fax

Continued from page 16

such an endeavor make her company even richer, if it could be grabbed before Tyanna could get to it then Alara's revenge would begin. In Bestal system, Alara found just the hidden gold mine she was hoping for. Before Tyanna and SoroSuub began expanding throughout the sector, Fax Ventures sealed the rights to Bestal Three and the Kadal Asteroid Field.

To all outward appearances, Fax Ventures is mining aluminite and corax from the asteroids and processing it on the planet. While this is a good cover and the mining is earning Alara a significant amount of credits, the real wealth waits in the jungles of Bestal Three. Here, the crusty seeds of the vortal tree are being harvested for medicinal purposes. Medpacs that use healing stimulants made from the seeds, for example, are 25% more effective than standard medpacs. Alara will be ready to market her new medpacs soon, putting them into direct competition with SoroSuub's proven sellers. She knows that this will hurt Tyanna's pride to no end—and perhaps even disgrace her in the eyes of her SoroSuub superiors. ❑

Going, Going . . .

At this year's Game Fair, support The Hand of Mercy Children's Hospital & Orphanage, and Marigold's Menagerie by participating in the Living City Bazaar auctions! The first auction will begin during Slot 10A, and the second during Slot 11B. Both continue until all items have been claimed.

Attend one or both auctions "in character" and bid on the many fabulous wares in "gold pieces"—*not* the gold pieces your character has accumulated, but actual U.S. currency at the rate of $1 = 1 gp.

There is one exception: at some point during the proceedings of each auction, it will be announced that ONLY Living City money will be accepted for the next item up for bid. At that point, those who wish to bid for the item in question must do so using actual gold pieces their characters have earned while adventuring in the Living City. In other words, there is a chance for your character to purchase a fabulous item for your LC character using imaginary money.

The charities mentioned above as the recipients of the money raised are in actuality The Wisconsin Children's Hospital and the Okada Guide Dog Program, which have been special charities for the RPGA® Network for the past several years. Here's our chance to support them better than ever, and to have a great time in the Living City Bazaar!

The Living Galaxy

Whither The Weather? Give Your Planet A Little Atmosphere

by Roger E. Moore

The setting of a science-fiction role-playing adventure is one of the three foundations on which everything in the adventure rests (the other two being characterization and plot). If that sounds like advice meant for prospective writers, you're correct. But why shouldn't it work for Game Masters as well? Telling a good story is what being a GM is all about, and knowing where the story takes place brings the story into focus, gives it that hard-to-catch wisp of reality.

You are accustomed to hearing of player and nonplayer characters with personalities, but you might be surprised to think of a setting as having its own personality. What does a setting do, after all? The rocks just sit there, but the sea waves roll, the tree branches sway, and the wind—ah, the *wind*. The wind, the rain, the summer-night's lightning, the silent snow falling, the fog that hides the enemy, the black sky as the hurricane approaches—this is the setting's personality. All else is just appearances, like a human face. But the weather makes the setting *move*.

The importance of weather in a fiction setting is made clear in the handbook *Writing Mysteries*, edited by detective novelist Sue Grafton. The chapter on "Background, Location and Setting" relates an anecdote about a writer who insisted that his audience "Put *weather* in!" This, the book tells us, is one of the "wicked, lovely ways of drawing out the power of a setting."

Mystery writers have done this for years. Mary Shelley used the technique with great success in her book *Frankenstein*, which some literary historians regard as the forerunner of all modern science fiction and horror. Think of the dreary, rainy day when the monster came to life, and you'll understand. (In the movies, a violent thunderstorm heralded the monster's birth—also a nice use of weather.)

Indeed, put weather in your science fiction setting. This article provides some ideas on doing just that.

The Environmental Triangle

Any planet with an atmosphere will have weather. The weather might be subtle or violent, hot or cold, windy or still, wet or dry, bright or dark. There might be seasons. There might be long days or short ones, long years or short ones. The world's gravity, atmospheric composition, terrain, humidity, axial tilt, and a hundred other variables all affect the weather. It's enough to drive a good GM mad trying to keep track of it. But it is important to isolate the weather in a role-playing scenario.

The weather in any particular scene in an adventure interacts with and highlights the characters (PCs and NPCs) and the physical setting (the rocks, sea, trees, and so on). To show how this works, we will take some examples of what a GM for a science-fiction game might say to a player about the weather in a particular scene. We'll keep our focus primarily on the weather on Earthlike worlds, though unusual sorts of weather are also mentioned. Look at each example and think about how you would handle that scene. Think about which words you would use, what sort of mood you would convey to the group, and what would result.

It is early in the night. All is quiet on the spacecraft landing field. You look up and see no stars; instead, there is blackness and a pressure on your face, as if the warm night sky were pressing down on you. Across the plains to the west, you see the flickering of an electrical storm. You hear no thunder, only your own breathing. Even your footsteps on the rock-paved landing field seem oddly distant, as if they're not made by you.

As you approach your ship, you notice someone leaning against the hull near the bridge doorway, standing in the shadows out of the landing lights. You can't make out who the person is, but the figure seems to be watching you, motionless and quiet.

To me, an electrical storm conveys unpredictability, quiet tension, and anxiety (perhaps the unknown person means you harm in some way). It can also convey unspoken primal forces such as passion (perhaps the person is a local person who is attracted to you, a lover-to-be). And the silent lightning might be a warning of otherworldly forces, bizarre dangers (the person is a shapechanging monster who has adopted the form of your best friend).

Adding low, rumbling thunder as the night storm approaches turns up the anxiety in the scene, increasing the threat. Rain will drive people indoors, perhaps into small spaces like the starship on the landing field. As pointed out in this column in POLYHEDRON® Newszine issue #76, such isolation and claustrophobia is perfect for a horror scenario. It can also tweak up the passion scale, as you can imagine.

You open the airlock door and go half blind from the brilliant sunlight. At the same instant, smothering heat rolls in, almost choking you. As you shield your face with your hands to block out the sun, you realize you are already starting to itch and sweat. The temperature must be well over 110 Fahrenheit outside. No wind stirs the air across the rocky desert.

No ground crew arrives from the backwater starport to meet you. You leave your ship and see a nearby fuel truck, obviously empty as its loading valves are open and dark. The landing field pavement is dusty and cracked with age. Your ears catch the faint sound of a radio from a tool shed. Perhaps someone is there who can refuel your ship.

A heat wave is stifling. It slows activity, suspends movement, blocks plans and makes them seem pointless and trivial. People become stranded unwillingly by their own lethargy, trapped in an open cage under a burning sun. Escape and relief become all important. Nothing else matters.

Hot, dry weather can lead to a survival situation if the PCs crash-land an air or space vehicle in a desert, as in the novel *The Flight of the Phoenix*. In less desperate situations, it marks a slow spot in an adventure, but one from which an entirely new direction may be taken. Little decisions might be made that lead to unexpected twists.

Perhaps the PCs, stranded while they wait for a fuel-truck convoy from another city to reach their craft, will take on several civilized-looking

passengers, quite unlike the sleepy lowlifes who inhabit the desert starport. The passengers help pay for the starship fuel, so eager are they to be aboard. Maybe those passengers later try to talk the PCs into letting them rent the ship and the PCs' services for a harmless little mission. And maybe that mission leads the PCs straight into the jaws of a terrifying adventure—all this because those passengers wanted only to get away from that hot little world, and the PCs wanted to leave, too.

The cold rain drums on the roof of your all-terrain fighting vehicle. The morning air is thick with the stench of burned homes smoldering behind you. Bregg the gunner, his face unshaven and lined with fatigue, sips quietly at a cold cup of coffee in the seat beside you, watching the grey hills and the grey sky and the grey rain through the narrow gun port.

Your radio headset crackles. The captain orders you to make a visual inspection of your forward perimeter. It's a routine check for snipers, saboteurs, sappers, and other local fauna. Bregg shakes his head as you prepare to leave, grateful to stay inside the ATFV. You unseal the hatch and climb out as Bregg puts down his coffee and takes the heavy machine-gun controls to cover you. You pray that the worst that will happen on your walk is that you'll get a little muddy and catch a cold.

Rain from low-lying clouds can be miserable weather, especially when it's cold. Even without a live foe, the weather is clearly not your friend. It brings misery, exhaustion, depression, despair, sorrow, and other low feelings into the forefront. In this example, the dreary side of warfare is brought out far more than it would be if the sun was shining down on a bright summer morning.

It is highly likely that something unusual is going to happen to the PC on his walk around the perimeter. He might be fired upon, captured, attacked by an animal, be caught by a trap or mine, or find something he didn't expect—a starving orphan, a battered suitcase full of valuables, or evidence of an approaching enemy force. The weather adds an unusual element to the situation, making the situation more difficult to resolve in most cases. The weather here thus becomes a foe that cannot be fought, increasing the stress on the PC and raising tension if shooting starts.

Ray Bradbury is a master at using weather to set the mood of his science-fiction tales. In one short story, "The Long Rain," military men crash-land on Venus, here depicted as a dark jungle world shrouded by eternal rain clouds, and must seek shelter. The presence of the endless rain and its effects on the stranded crew are presented in clear, lean prose all the more disturbing for its simplicity.

Rain can add a deliciously bleak character to a more limited setting if it is commonly encountered there. Los Angeles, as it appears in the recent film *Blade Runner*, would not be the same without its overcast, dripping skies. This effect lends an eerie, grim, low-life quality to the city and the events that occur within it.

Similar rainy visions appear early on in Robert Harris's alternate-history tale, *Fatherland*, and early in James P. Hogan's novel, *The Proteus Operation*, also an alternate-universe setting. In each of these novels, Nazi Germany has won the Second World War, and the atmosphere created by the rainy-weather scenes is unsettling and miserable.

You awaken in your sleeping bag with aches in your muscles and joints. An odd sense of anticipation dogs you as you dress and push open the flap of your tent. The high mountain air is still; the glacier wasteland seems to be waiting. You sense that something is wrong, and you turn to scan the horizon.

The sky to the west is filled with a titanic black wall towering far above the surrounding mountains. Vrakkla, the local guide, emerges from his tent and eyes the sky in silence. "We lost our gamble to beat the storm," he murmurs. "We've got an hour, maybe ninety minutes. We need to find shelter—a cave or something—before it gets here. If we don't, they won't dig us out for ten thousand years."

Weather can be a ferocious enemy, a violent destroyer that must be survived. Its arrival brings drama and action to a scenario. Surviving a storm is unlikely to be the climax of the adventure, but it adds a nice touch to build the suspense and tension along the way. The pressure to survive keeps the adventure lively at times when it might tend to drag.

Suppose the PCs are hunting in cold mountains for the wreck of a crashed spacecraft. An approaching blizzard adds a tight time element to their quest to rescue survivors or gain riches. A storm can make things much worse, adding complicating factors to an already troubled adventure. The problems encountered by the heroes of the movie *Jurassic Park* would not have been half as bad if a hurricane had not passed through when the dinosaurs escaped.

A storm that is characteristic of a world presents a special element to a campaign set on that world. Mars is racked by planetwide dust storms that last for weeks; for unknown reasons, these appear when Mars is at both perihelion (its closest approach to the Sun) and opposition (when Earth lies directly between Mars and the Sun). No scenario on Mars would be complete without the expected appearance of such a titanic storm. Marvelous illustrations of Martian landscapes—with dust storms—appear in the 1993 revised edition of *The Grand Tour: A Traveller's Guide to the Solar System*, by Ron Miller and William K. Hartmann. Imagine a scenario in which a group of bounty hunters must track a criminal gang across Mars with a dust storm looming over them all. The tension is torqued up quite nicely by the storm's threat.

Another example of a characteristic storm appears in *A World Named Cleopatra*, by Poul Anderson and other writers. A combination of factors has made the storm systems of Cleopatra more violent, though short-lived, than those on Earth. The book opens, in fact, with the protagonists landing on the world in the middle of a nasty storm, setting a mood for the rest of the tale as the pressures of war tear away at the colony there.

The tension of a storm can be boosted by placing the characters in vulnerable positions. Are the PCs aboard a ship sailing into the jaws of a hurricane? Has the monsoon season settled in while the characters are crossing a flash-flood plain? Vulnerability brings out a subtle strain of fear (and further excitement) long before there's anything to really worry about.

Fog wraps the city as night falls, rising from the river and the sea to muffle all sound and cloak the light. You shiver for a moment in the cool evening air as you head back to the starport along the nearly deserted streets, past dark shop windows and softly glowing street lights spaced too far apart.

For a moment you think you hear footsteps behind you. You pause and

turn, but see no one. A ship's horn blows far away, out in the harbor. After looking around a bit more, you walk on toward the starport. Now, however, your senses are awake, probing the mist that surrounds you. If someone there? Are you being followed?

Fog and mist hide things, bringing out uncertainty and fear. Paranoia creeps into your soul. Can you be sure of what is around you when you can't see anything clearly?

The tales of Jack the Ripper and the London fog that covered his tracks were brought back to life in a "Star Trek" TV episode, "Wolf in the Fold." Ray Bradbury used fog to bring out an otherworldly atmosphere for his story of a lonely sea monster, "The Fog Horn." Fog also sets up nice settings for espionage stories and murder mysteries because of its ability to hide reality—a theme perfectly reflected in those genres.

A chase or escape scenario is also aided by fog or other visibility-cutting weather. PCs hunted by an alien carnivore have more to worry about in bad weather than good. PCs tracking down an escaped convict could turn into victims if their prey doubles back and decides to eliminate them before they get him. Things become worse if the convict is an alien that relies on a form of batlike echolocation, so that the fog never hampers his movements and ability to detect his surroundings.

Weather can appear in other forms and have numerous other effects, too. In Larry Niven's "Inconstant Moon," the bizarre parade of deadly weather patterns flashing across the world is the herald of disaster, as a solar flare has burned away life on the far side of the Earth. The strangeness of this effect emphasizes the awful change that has taken place, and it gives an end-of-the-world scenario a very frightening quality if the effects are carefully and logically detailed—the more realistic, the better.

Some scientists fear that atomic war could trigger a "nuclear winter," a mixture of destructive weather formations detailed in *The Cold and the Dark*, a book by Paul Ehrlich, Carl Sagan, Donald Kennedy, and Walter Roberts. A visit to a ruined, post-atomic world, shrouded in dark clouds and cold winds, would be depressing and oppressive, qualities all further emphasized by the weather. Similar "nuclear winter" weather was noted during the 1816 Tamboro volcanic explosion that produced snow in New England in July and August—"the year without a summer." A world suffering severe vulcanism would be just as terrible as a nuked-out one, if not worse because the vulcanism doesn't stop. The Earth has also suffered devastating meteorite strikes in ages past, threatening all life and producing some wild weather to go with it.

A long-term drop of global temperatures, resulting from decreased solar activity, could trigger a new Ice Age and force the polar inhabitants of a world to move to overcrowded equatorial areas where space is already at a premium. The change in climate, though slow and subtle, would still set up an environment of increasing population tension. Rival national and ethnic groups must now compete for limited living area, increasing social chaos. Thus even a bit of snowy weather serves as an unpleasant reminder of this world's downbeat future. A sudden warming trend, as depicted in J.G. Ballard's novel, *The Drowned World*, is also worth a thought.

Finally, even *good* weather can be used to produce an emotional reaction in a role-playing scenario. True, really nice weather can be used to highlight an upbeat, uplifting event, such as a coronation, the end of a war, and the return home of weary but successful PCs. But consider, too, how a perfectly nice day can set up the PCs for disaster, making the oncoming punch even worse because it seems so out of place and unexpected.

At the extreme, Robert Merle's *Malevil* tells how a bright, sunny day became a nightmare when a nuclear war began. Another nuclear war took place in Philip Wylie's *Tomorrow!* during a snowy Christmas day—otherwise a very pleasant time of year. For most role-playing purposes, however, a pleasant day can be the setting for a much more subtle effect: the disappearance of a friend, the news of an assassination, the reappearance of an old enemy. The difference between the bad news and the nice setting can be subtly heightened for better effect.

The point of all this is to take the setting seriously in your role-playing adventures. If all Earthlike worlds seem to have sunshine and blue skies when the PCs arrive, an important element of reality is lost, damaging the GM's presentation and discouraging players from becoming more involved in the story-telling.

Put the weather in and see what effects it has on the game as a whole. My bet is that the added reality and unpredictability will enliven the game sessions, and they will bring out the emotional quality of your game much better, too.

Classifieds

Attention: Anyone telephoning RPGA® Network Headquarters! HQ is not available for phone calls on Tuesdays and Thursdays before 1:00 p.m. central time. Don't call on those mornings; please call at other times.

Attention ARC-Fellowship Members: The 2nd Annual ARC Banquet is scheduled for October 8, 1994. The banquet will once again be held in conjunction with Hexacon in Greensboro, NC. You must be a registered guest of Hexacon '94 to attend. For more information about the banquet and the con, write: Hexacon '94, c/o Sherrie Miller, Box 4, EUC, UNC-G, Greensboro, NC 27403. The cost of the banquet is $16/member, and seating is limited.

Attention Modem Users: GEnie and internet mail gives us a great new medium for communication, and the volume of e-mail for each of the TSR accounts is rising steadily. To be sure you reach the right account, please use the tsr.rpga@genie.geis.com address to contact RPGA® Network HQ. Use tsr.mags@genie.geis.com to write to DUNGEON® or DRAGON® Magazines, and tsr.online@genie.geis.com for contacting TSR in general. *Please* keep letters that need replies brief and concrete, and *never* send unsolicited manuscripts. And if your message is intended for an individual, be sure to include that person's name at the top of your letter.

Attention Tournament Writers: Chaosium will award products to RPGA® Network authors whose Chaosium game tournaments are submitted and sanctioned. For more information, send a SASE to: Chaosium Tournaments/D.G. Dennis, 11001 Magnolia Park, Oklahoma City, OK 73120.

England: I'm a 17-year-old gamer in the Croydon area looking for a gaming group for fun sessions. I have 7 years player, 3 years DM experience. I'm also looking for FOR7 *Drow of the Underdark* and the original *Oriental Adventures* hardcover. Please send price lists. I'm also after world-wide correspondence. *All* letters will be answered, especially those sharing gaming tips and suggestions.

England: Players and DMs for a slightly irregular AD&D® game group in Leeds. We play Sundays 7-10ish about two weeks in four. Currently three players and one DM. Phone Geoff on Leeds 707511 for details—evenings only, not Sundays. Other systems considered, but we do love our AD&D game sessions (and occasional full weekends).

For Sale: A wide variety of role-playing modules, supplements, and magazines. For a complete list, send a business-sized envelope with $0.52 postage to: Bill Brierton, 12420 Old Colony Drive, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-5000.

For Sale: *Forgotten Futures:* The scientific romance role-playing game. Complete RPG rules, world book, adventure, and two SF stories by Rudyard Kipling. Supplied as text and .GIF files on IBM-compatible disk. $10 or £5 from Marcus L. Rowland, 22 Westbourne Park Villa, London, W2 SEA, England. Price includes *Forgotten Futures II* (available summer '94). State disk size (sorry, no 360K).

For Sale: A large collection of RPGs, modules, accessories, board games, comic books, and paperbacks. Also DUNGEON Adventures #1-44 and POLYHEDRON® Newszine #46-91. Most items are in excellent condition. Best offer. For a list of items, contact: Michael Assalone, 906 Aberdeen Road, Salisbury, MD 21801-9313.

For Sale: Back issues of DRAGON Magazine (back to mid-40's), POLYHEDRON Newszine (complete set), and many, many comic books. Most magazines in excellent to mint condition, comics very good to mint. Send SASE for list to: Julia Martin, 1400D West Street #5, Union Grove, WI 53182. You may call me at (414) 878-3917, but I won't send a list without SASE.

General: Well met, ladies and gentlemen of the RPGA Network. My name is Edwin D. Wolff II, and I am asking interested Network members to contact me with their ideas on how I might hold a tournament within an institutional (prison) setting. I have come to experience the rehabilitation and positive influence which role-playing has had in my life; however, I am having great difficulty relating this to the administration of this institution. Although greatly limited, I believe that with your help my dream can become a reality. Please write to me at: #506882, Wynne Unit, TDCJID, Huntsville, TX 77349.

General: Join Dragonslayers Unlimited! We publish our own bi-monthly newszine using member submissions of stories, artwork, new games, favorite PCs, new monsters, magical items and spells, tips from GMs, and more. Several club members offer a diverse selection of play-by-mail games for the membership. To preview our newszine, send $2, or to join Dragonslayers Unlimited, send $14 (please make check or money order payable to Jil Conway). All inquiries welcome. Write to: Jil Conway, Rt 6, 3001 Johnson Lane, Columbia, MO 65202-8510.

General: Announcing RPGNet, a computer-supported BBS mail network covering 10 US states and two Canadian provinces with access numbers. The best part: it's all free! Over 80 access numbers. Call: (313) 561-8843 voice or RPGNet National HQ at (810) 543-8613 with modem settings 8-N-1 14,400 and get your local access number!

General: I'm looking for anybody who has the *Star Wars* RPG for sale. Also looking for pen pals. I play/DM the AD&D game (FORGOTTEN REALMS,® AL-QADIM,® and SPELLJAMMER®) settings, *Shadowrun*, and—soon—*Star Wars*. Also, please write to me if you are interested in contacting the guildmaster of WORG (Worldwide Open Roleplayer's Guild). Write: James Wassell, 18 Chantry Avenue, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, England, TN40 2EA. Or call: +44 424 224925.

Illinois: I am looking for a beginning D&D® or AD&D game group to play

with. Call after 3:45 p.m. or on weekends: (815) 363-9576. Jerimiah A. Lamb, 505 Autumn Blvd, Apt. 302, Lakemoor, IL 60050.

New York: Putnam Valley Peekskill area gamers, hear ye, year ye! 12-year-old DM looking for a few players and/or other DMs. Would like to meet once a week to play *Pendragon*, the AD&D game, DRAGONLANCE™ or DARK SUN® settings, the D&D game, the HOLLOW WORLD® setting, or other games (if you have them). Write to: 14 Mountain View Road, Putnam Valley, NY 10579. Or call: (914) 328-3776.

New York: Experienced DM looking for AD&D game players in the Norwich area. Both novice and experienced players are welcome. Write to: Kevin Simmons, P.O. Box 351, Sherburne, NY 13460.

Pen Pals: Hello! I'm looking for pen pals. My hobbies and interests are SF and fantasy, all three *Star Treks; Star Wars; Doctor Who;* science fact; astronomy; medieval history; British humor, including Monty Python; Tolkien; the AD&D game; cartoons; and Irish, Celtic, New Age, and Soft Rock music. Write to me: David Robinson, 2413 Walker Chapel Road, Fultondale AL 35068. Or call: (205) 841-3333 after 3:30 CST or on weekends. All letters and phone calls will be accepted, but do not call collect.

Pen Pals: I am looking for pen pals, gamers who like the AD&D game and/or anyone interested in submarine warfare. Write: Brian Dominique, 9 North Wind Circle, Ledyard, CT 06339.

Pen Pals: I am a 19-year-old psychology major and beginning writer seeking as many pen pals as possible to discuss music, television, movies, horror fiction (especially the man, Stephen King!), politics, role-playing games, and anything and everything else that comes to our minds. I am an open-minded individual and will discuss nearly anything for a while. I'll answer all letters regardless of the age, gender, or nationality of the writer. Sadly, I read and write only English. Write to: Sean Murphy, 1324 East Hills Drive, Moore, OK 73160.

Play-by-Mail: We are looking for players to start a play-by-mail AD&D game. We will play in Greyhawk, Ravenloft, and Krynn. We will answer all letters. Jean Charles Drayfus, 230 Routes Dollines, 06560 Valbonne France, or 99 SE 5th Street, Miami, FL 33131.

Texas: 20-year-old gamer seeks to form or join a gaming group near Bay City. I have experience in many games, and I enjoy trying new ones. Write to Phillip Parsons, 1401 Sailfish Drive, Bay City, TX 77414. Or call: (409) 245-2761.

Trading Cards: Wanted: TSR '94 gold-bordered cards #262, 296, 298, 304. If you have these, please write: Sandy Freedman, 135 Brentwood Circle, N. Andover, MA 01845, or call (508) 688-4341.

Wanted: I am compiling a list of original spells and magical items. If you have any, please send copies to: Eric Jarvis, 20 Braeburn Lane, Middletown, CT 06457.

Wanted: Judges! Dragoncon still needs more people to judge tournament events. For more information on what events most need judges, write to Mark Liberman at: 4232 Harris Ridge Court, Roswell, GA 30076. Be sure to include your phone number in your inquiry.

Wanted: Monsters! I'm a monster collector looking for original AD&D game monsters and reasonable deals on used MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® accessories. Write to: Tim Meyers, 103 Indiana Avenue, Maryville, TN 37801.

Wanted: Network Judges for GEN CON® Game Fair. Don't forget that Network judges who run three or more slots pay only $10 for admission to the convention. Don't let your judge level languish: advance both as a player and a judge! If you would like to help the Network by running games, send a note with the times and events for which you're available to: RPGA Network Judge Appeal, P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva WI, 53147.

Wisconsin: Twenty-two-year-old gamer looking for players or an existing group to play the AD&D game, *Star Wars*, and *Ars Magica*. I am willing to learn any new system. I would like to join or help start a Network gaming group. Write: Richard Iorio II, 1817 First Avenue, Grafton, WI 53024. Or call: (414) 375-1744 after 2 p.m.

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The Ravens Bluff Trumpeter

Volume 1, issue 21
Editor-in-chief: Strunk Norbert
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City desk: Jacinth Moonspring

Retraction

This paper erroneously reported the death of Ambassador Carrague in the previous edition. While the Ambassador's body had been discovered by neighbors, and they believed him to be passed away, a spokesman for the mortician's parlor claims the Ambassador came to shortly before he was to be interred. The Trumpeter regrets the error in its reporting.

The spokesman said mortician workers were "shocked and frightened" by the incident, and two of them left to find employment elsewhere.

Ambassador Carrague, age 130, told a Trumpeter reporter that he was merely sleeping. "It was the first sound sleep I'd had in days. In fact, I was so tired I cast a *sleep* spell to make sure I'd get some shut-eye. Busybody neighbors . . . don't know how to caulk a foundation properly. And all this business about fire-breathing toads. Humph! The followers of Tyr should be more careful where they lay their shields."

Neighbors speculate that Carrague instead cast a *feign death* spell upon himself. They claim the Ambassador has been known to confuse spells.

Chemcheaux Branch Offices

Ravens Bluff's office of the Chemcheaux magical store announced it would be opening shop at upcoming events in and around the Living City. This news should be especially interesting to adventurers who wish to procure items enabling them to strike monsters more effectively or defend themselves from various menaces. The shops pay gold pieces for traded-in magic items, and barter magic for magic.

Shops will be open at the following conventions:

*ORIGINS, July 7-10 in the realm of San Jose, CA.

*Dragon Con, July 22-24 in the realm of Atlanta, GA.

*GEN CON® Game Fair, August 18-21 in the most fabled realm of Milwaukee, WI.

These are the only official and sanctioned openings of Chemcheaux shops this summer. To enjoy the Chemcheaux shops, Network members are encouraged to bring their player characters, magic items, and gold coins to the above conventions.

Obituaries

Carolan Escalan, 70, Ravens Bluff, died an honorable death yesterday in defense of his fellow adventurers. The brave elf's body was taken to the Temple of Selune, where his companions presented the priests there nearly 50,000 to aid in his resurrection. Mirial Moonsilver, the high priestess of temple, used a *rod of resurrection*. However, Carolan's body was not up to the rigors of the magic, and he slipped beyond the reach of magic or the gods. His possessions were donated to the Temple of Selune for use in the construction of a children's home. Adventurers in Ravens Bluff will miss Carolan Escalan, and his companions have vowed to uphold the symbol of honor which his actions so often represented. ***Carolan Escalan, a 5th-level elven fighter played by David Feest Jr., died during the Living City tournament, The Greater of Two Evils, at the Total Confusion Game Convention this spring.***

Fineous Graves, 67, Ravens Bluff—Senior undertaker for the city, Master Graves suffered a sudden and overwhelming shock while on the job. He is survived by his three children and eight grandchildren.

Felina Fireheart, 40, Ravens Bluff—The flame-tressed adventuring bard who was involved in many ventures for city officials, met her end recently near Maskyr's Eye. Friends of the deceased half-elven beauty said she foolishly traipsed off on her own into the wilds, knowing monsters and worse might be about. Worse found her. *Fireheart was an 8th level character played by Brandon Amancio of Connecticut.*

Current Clack

Our man inside the Lord Mayor's palace tells us of a new woman in Charlie's life—and not just another pretty ornament this time! This recent addition to our esteemed Mayor's social life has kicked up quite a stir, apparently interfering with a visit by the Lord Speaker, Melissa Eldaran. Though our man didn't see the mystery woman, she upset the Mayor enough that he refused to see the Lord Speaker. The only part of Charlie's outburst our man heard: "That confounded woman! Can't you keep her out of here?" When asked to shed some light on this shady subject, Melissa herself protested that she had no idea what the problem could be.

When he's not busy fighting with his mystery woman, Lord Chuck has another battle to attend. Since the formation of his new Ministry of Mag . . . I mean "Ministry of Art" (who chooses these names?), opinion has been divided but mainly against the new government body. Sirrus Melander, head of the Ravens Bluff Clerical Circle responded to the announcement of the newly-formed Ministry of Magic. "While the Art, as they call it, certainly affects all our lives, it is the guidance of the ministers of *faith*, not of magic, which shall best advise the Council and the Lord Mayor. Practitioners of secular magics have their place in the city, but not in such solemn matters as governing the people."

More heated was the reaction from the Diviner's Guild. Saldo Presto, one of the three guild masters, had this to say: "We of the Diviner's Guild strongly protest the appointment of a non-guild diviner to the Ministry. This decision of the Mayor's is hasty, careless, and wrong. Such positions should be elected, as are our own—not just meted out to favorites and supporters." When asked to name which of the appointments he considered to be repaid favors, Presto demurred. But we at the *Trumpeter* trust that our readership is canny enough to recognize several of the names of the new "Ministers of Art."